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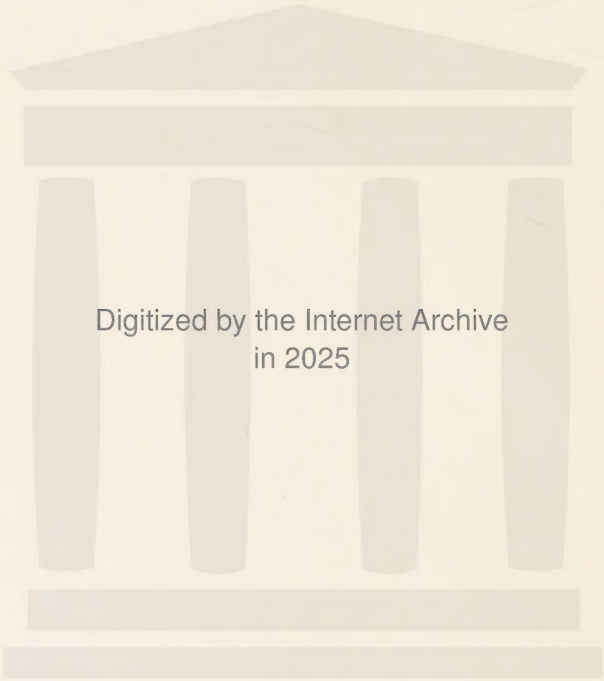

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THE RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTIES OF YOUTH

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ESSAYS OF INTERPRETATION AND INSPIRATION

BY
REV. ALBERT D. BELDEN, B.D.
AUTHOR OF
"THE GREATER CHRIST," "GOD'S BETTER THINGS," ETC.

INTRODUCTION BY
REV. SYDNEY M. BERRY, M.A., D.D.

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To
THE YOUTH OF CROWSTONE

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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FOREWORD

THE essays in this volume are the fruit of a ministry in which youth had has a big share. The author has always deemed it a supreme duty and privilege to be accessible, in the freest possible manner, to the seekings and questionings of his young people. He would like, therefore, to bear testimony to them here as a band of Christian youth of whose noble qualities he is deeply proud. In this volume are presented the main points of difficulty that have emerged in many public hecklings and private discussions. Naturally, the matters are dealt with in a popular and nonacademic way, but without violence, he trusts, to sound scholarship.

The future of the faith has nothing to fear from youth that is mentally alive and questioning earnestly. Any menace from youth comes from the unawakened and slothful mind, from "the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin." Should this volume awaken any such or help modern youth in any degree to find the one and only sufficient Saviour of mankind, the writer will be amply rewarded for many a strenuous hour spent wrestling with youth.

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INTRODUCTION

BY REV. SYDNEY M. BERRY, M.A., D.D.

It is with very real pleasure that I accept the invitation of my friend, Mr. Belden, to write a few words of preface to the present volume. The aim it has in view is second to none in importance. To commend the faith of the centuries to the mind and heart of youth is a task which is never ended. The stream of life is forever being refreshed, and every generation brings its own peculiar standpoints and questions. These questions must be frankly faced, for even if we have no complete answers to offer, the one condition of spiritual influence is absolute sincerity and openness. Youth cannot be satisfied by mere repetitions of the conclusions of a bygone age either in thought or language. The whole question of faith is tried in the mental assize of every fresh generation, and the conditions of our own time have intensified it to the point of crisis. An advocate of faith to-day needs to be free from any bondage to past modes of thought or expression, and equally he needs to be free from that bondage to mere modernity which is surely the most barren of all cults. Mr. Belden is well qualified to steer a course between these two dangers. He has also the courage which is needed in a difficult enterprise of this kind. For let there be no mistake about it, courage is needed. There are always those who are ready to plead that the elders should not be disturbed. The Church which moves under that motto may earn the reward of placidity at the cost of forfeiting inspiration, for the

Church which leaves one class undisturbed will leave the other unmoved. Courage and wisdom, however, are not foes, and the Church is well served neither by the fire eaters nor the fire quenchers. It is in the confidence that this book will help the young folk to give the allegiance of mind and heart to the Christian faith that I commend it and wish it Godspeed in the great purpose its author has in view.

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PART ONE
INTERPRETATION—THE DIFFICULTIES

CHAPTER I

NATURE AND GOD

THE magic word of our day is "youth." Nearly every nation under the sun is witnessing a new youth movement. News has recently come to this country of the amazing exploits of the youth of China, who have been able, actually by their courage and determination, to compel the political authorities to remove from office certain corrupt officials.

Most of us have heard of the Wander Vögel movement in Germany, or, as its wider title goes, the free German youth movement. This movement particularly is characterized by a great return to nature, to the open-air life, to simple diet, to communion with the beauty and wonder of the natural world. In our own country we have recently had Sir James Barrie's recognition of the rising power of youth in his impressive rectorial address entitled "Courage." In most of our Churches youth is asserting itself with a fresh ardor and in response to a new sympathy from the older generation.

May there not be a sublime meaning in this world-wide youth movement? We have just suffered the horror of the World War, in which was sacrificed the very flower of the world's youth, and now there returns upon our world this great torrent of youthful impulse, as though the spirits of the youths slain were finding resurrection.

Is this God's reply to the bitterness of our bereave-

ment? Is it being proved before our very eyes once more that the way of sacrifice is the way of power? Is it indeed the youths whose names adorn our war memorial and our Church rolls of honor who are returning in spiritual power to rule the world for which they died? Certain it is that the Christian faith which worships a youthful Saviour should have the warmest welcome for youth. It is a young man, a youthful God hanging upon a cross, rising from a grave, reigning in the unseen, who seeks to rule our human world.

To save our youth for Christ is the noblest task to which the Church can apply itself, and to achieve it in our generation it is essential that we should find some simple and sound restatements of Christian belief in terms of modern thought which will appeal to youth as reasonable. Youth is nothing if not rational, and seeks to base even its strong mysticism on reasonable foundations.

It is unavoidable that youth should find itself keenly interested in the world. It has but lately broken free from the shelter of home and school; it is but lately realizing itself as a component part of society, as confronted both within itself and without by that mysterious thing called nature. It finds itself the arena of a battle between apparently alien forces, as it sees the same conflict in the world. It is this sense of conflict that is so particularly disturbing to youth. Expecting to find all the world friendly, it finds nature red in tooth and claw, society a confusion of contending forces, and its own soul a fiercer battle ground still. Now, amid the dust of this conflict, youth finds it often very difficult to discover God, and the tendency emerges for youth to put itself to school

with the world, the world of nature and of society, and to become rather shy of accepting orthodox interpretations. It wants to understand the facts before being captured for a point of view. The revolt from authority, which is both natural and wholesome in certain aspects, is apt in this case to lead youth to throw away or to ignore the one fact which is the only key to an understanding of the world—viz., the fact of God.

Is it really reasonable for youth to expect, first of all, to compass all the facts of nature; to investigate all the revelations of science; to understand all the relationships of the various parts of the vast mechanism that we call the world before it shall feel justified in believing in God? By such means a religion may be provided for old age, but one will hardly gather it in time for youth. Would it not be better to return to the grand assumption that God is, and then try to estimate the degree of justification that can be gained for such an assumption from what is known thus far by reputable authorities of nature and humanity?

Religion offers to the soul a hypothesis and calls upon the soul to make trial of it. There is, of course, no compulsion of belief; in other words, religion's demand upon the soul is of the same character as the demand made by any other body of human knowledge. For example, mathematics offers to us the hypothesis that two plus two equals four. We are not compelled to believe it. Some of us may recall how much difficulty we had in remembering it; but just as the proof of the pudding is in the eating, so the proof of any value in the theory that two plus two equals four is to be found in the awful muddle that results if one refuses to believe it, and in the harmony that results if

one accepts it. This is the method of science. Again and again its progress has been due to the patient attempt to verify a hypothesis that seemed reasonable. The unverifiable hypothesis science discards or holds over for further investigation. The hypothesis that results in harmony it feels to be confirmed.

The demand that religion makes is no less scientific. If God is, there is a strong presumption that he must be the most obvious thing in his creation. He must strike upon our consciousness even before the world, and at least simultaneously with our own selves. What if God gives himself with every awakening consciousness? Some one has said that God "sleeps in the stone, stirs in the animal, wakes in the man." If we are honest with ourselves, must we not admit as immediate a conviction of God as of free will or as of self-consciousness? Even that arch-intellectualist, H. G. Wells, has recently admitted the truth of this immediate consciousness of God, for writing in *God the Invisible King*, he makes the striking declaration that "no soul is alone in itself."

Let youth dwell in its thought upon this possibility for a while. In its investigation of the world, let it start with what is nearest, not with what is farthest from it, and then, approaching nature and humanity, let it discover the harmony that results from such an assumption.

It is true that upon the level of nature in the world and in ourselves there is evident a conflict between what is and what we feel ought to be. But what else would souls expect to find who possess an immediate consciousness of the ultimate and the perfect?

If, of course, we go to nature minus man expecting to find it a perfect expression of what God is, then it

may indeed be difficult to find God, certainly difficult to find the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But what right have we so to abstract from nature what is after all its great achievement, man? If nature exists for man; if it is meant to be, as it were, a pedestal for God's masterpiece, then its inadequacy to man's ideal finds ready explanation. Man's criticism of nature then becomes the divine reason expressing itself through man upon those past achievements which were only meant to be stages toward an end, and are naturally, therefore, imperfect. If this superiority of man to nature is questioned, one can only protest that there is nothing discernible in nature approaching in any appreciable degree to the wonder of personality. There are, of course, hints and approximations, as one would expect from the laboratory that has been used for man's production, but to no straight-seeing soul can there be any reasonable doubt that man is the crown of nature's achievement.

As a matter of fact, very little of a rational kind can be made of nature without the assumption of God. To endeavor to explain the world apart from God is to place a great strain upon one's credulity. The beliefs of unbelief are far more credulous than those of belief. It is like standing on one's head to look at the world. Everything becomes upside down in comparison with our usual judgments. The intelligible is derived from the unintelligent; the feeling is derived from the unfeeling; the purposeful is derived from the unpurposeful.

Alfred Noyes, in his wonderful scientific epic, *The Torchbearers*, has a passage in his poem upon Kepler in which this is very well expressed. Kepler had been

disputing with certain men who thought that chance could explain the world, and at last he quotes to them the saying with which his wife had disposed of the argument:

> One night
> When I was tired and all my mind a-dust
> With pondering on their atoms, I was called
> To supper, and she placed before me there
> The most delicious salad. It would appear
> I thought aloud, that if these pewter dishes,
> Green hearts of lettuce, tarragon, slips of thyme,
> Slices of hard-boiled egg, and grains of salt,
> With drops of water, vinegar, and oil,
> Had in a bottomless gulf been flying about
> From all eternity, one sure certain day
> The sweet invisible hand of happy chance
> Would serve them as a salad.
> "Likely enough,"
> My wife replied; "but not so good as mine,
> Nor so well dressed. Come, John, say grace."

The modern study of nature is leading the scientist to believe that the conflict which ultimately projects itself within the soul of man between good and evil finds its preparation in and is but the culmination of the conflict that we perceive in nature. A recent writer has said: "Let us look at the things which nature does appear to want; the things she really does care about. There are plenty of bees and plenty of flowers; plenty of sheep and plenty of green fields; plenty of men and plenty of corn. What strikes us about these things? They are useful to one another. The bee helps the flowers, the flowers help the bees; the sheep help the grass, the grass helps the sheep; man helps wheat and wheat helps man. It is quite different with tigers and wolves and eagles; they tilt

only of themselves. They kill and destroy; they help nothing. It looks as if this movement in nature is on the side of coöperation and opposed to selfishness. Nature wanted swiftness and produced the tiger, but the tiger used its swiftness only for self purposes, and nature abandoned it. It looks, then, as if the natural movement is moral. It is not following a bad direction, but a good one."

It would seem, then, that most of what is in man is rudimentary in nature. We can see, as it were, man's parts sprinkled about the workshop, but it is in man that these things evidently are to find their final harmony and their eventual triumph.

Conflict exists, but it is no denial of our ideal. It is due entirely to the progressive character of God's creative method. It is the birth struggle of the new order that must ever succeed upon the old. So far from indicating fundamental opposition it means instead that One is in the midst of creation fighting for what we desire and calling upon us to follow him. In other words, when one goes with God to nature, one understands his handiwork and sees the widening purpose running through it all. But if one goes to nature without him, no understanding is possible.

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CHAPTER II

THE SUPERNATURAL IN LIFE

Most of us approach life with a high degree of nervousness. Nature breeds fear deeply into all her offspring. Even the proverbial conceit of youth is largely the overassertiveness of a soul which is secretly not quite sure of itself.

There are, therefore, few questions more attractive to us all than the question whether there really is a supernatural power available for the help of humanity. "O that I knew where I might find Him!" is a much more constant and a far deeper cry of the human soul than we give one another credit for.

Miracle

In the unscientific period of human history, it was unavoidable and natural that men should look instinctively toward the irregular happenings in their experience in their search for the supernatural. Indeed, the term natural might almost be replaced by the term familiar. The natural is that which has come under human observation and, to a large extent, under human comprehension; the supernatural is that which is above the world as we know it, although not necessarily in antagonism to its laws. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the early records of mankind full of what is deemed supernatural; man's range of knowledge over nature was so small and the realm of wonder was correspondingly so large. Man is reared now on an atmosphere of science; an atmosphere dominated by the fact of nature's uniformity; and if wonder is discoverable anywhere by the reverent soul

to-day, it is to be found in the majestic law and order that everywhere fills creation. This development is, of course, due to our increased knowledge of nature. As more and more of nature has come under our observation and understanding, the supernatural has more and more retreated, so it seems, from our experience. But is not this what we should expect? Should it mean for us the absence of the supernatural, or should it become a stronger proof of its presence? The father to his little child is a being of almost limitless wonder. He knows everything and can do everything, and the fact that he is a being of law and order is not very obvious; he is much more the being who destroys the usual routine of life with extraordinary delights and often with amazing indulgence. But to the grown lad he is a being who, to an extent, can be described as "found out." He is not the creature of arbitrary decision that he used to be; he is himself in the grip of the nature of things, and in a very real sense this once supreme authority, breaking in upon the child's life with sudden transformation, retreats into an atmosphere of consultation and of mutual understanding. But the father is not a lessening factor, therefore, in his son's experience. He is rather a much greater and nearer reality.

Allowing for the natural limitations of our illustration, should we not expect that as mankind advances in knowledge its experience of miracle should be lessened? Man, at first taught by wonder, must now be disciplined by law, in preparation, we hope, for the supreme freedom of the gospel.

It is not quite true to say that miracles do not happen these days. If primitive man could dwell

for a little while in our modern world, he would break all his records in the experience of wonder; in fact, his life would probably be a series of gasps, finishing up with what might be termed shell shock. What is miracle for one generation is natural for another, except for the abiding miracle that with all our knowledge there is in the simplest thing something more that we do not understand.[1]

This constant miracle of mystery in all things is best interpreted as being due to the fact that all things inhere in God or in God's creative thought. Hence, through every simplest phenomenon there is a way into the infinitude of the divine mind. In other words, wherever you look in the world you are faced with the strong suggestion of an immanent presence. As Tennyson says in *The Higher Pantheism:*

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains,
Are not these, O Soul, the vision of Him who reigns?

Yet although miracle may be termed a lessening factor in human experience, it will doubtless always remain a real factor. Are there any lives, if the truth were known, without a few wonderful happenings inexplicable by our ordinary knowledge? The value of a measure of true miracle is far greater than is generally assumed in our age. It helps to break for us the sense of being imprisoned in a machine that works always in one way. It preserves for us the sense of a person dominating the machine and having some regard for the feelings of its human products. The modern mind can have little sympathy, however, with that type of religious temperament which is always clutching at

[1]Cf. Part II, Chapter IV.

miracle, whether in history or in current life, as the supreme indication of the presence of God. The sense of wonder and reverence is not best preserved by a limitless credulity. On the contrary, it is spoiled by it and lapses into crass and craven superstition. We should indeed be in a mess if God were, to any great degree, constantly breaking in upon the law and order that he himself has created. If fire did not usually burn, and if water were not commonly wet, if things did not in the main retain their properties, the world would simply become utterly untrustworthy, man could depend on nothing, and would be bewildered and lost.

We must look elsewhere, then, for more convincing proof of the supernatural in life.

The Right Direction

When Jesus uttered his remarkable description of God, "God is Spirit," he gave permanent and final direction to the human quest for God. Not outward to the stars are we to look, though much may be learned therefrom, but primarily inward to the soul, to what we know of the spirit. Questing in this direction we come upon two supreme facts.

1. *The Fact of Moral Progress.*

If nature is a mere soulless mechanism, it is impossible to find an adequate explanation of moral progress. Force inevitably follows the line of least resistance unless there is some greater force propelling it in the other direction. If water runs uphill, we look at once for the power that is causing it to do so. Yet moral achievement at every stage of human development has been essentially a following of the line of most resistance. Some force is evidently operating upon

man, giving him the power to restrain his inclinations, and often to oppose and overcome them. It is in this "power other than ourselves making for righteousness" that we find the supreme focus in our experience of the supernatural. Let the reader reflect upon the way in which, concerning virtue, he can never quite claim it as wholly his own. The moment we feel a person is conscious of his virtue as his very own, we feel he has already lost virtue. This is a direct verdict of the average soul. How different it is with sin. We at once feel that sin is all too terribly our very own responsibility. In other words, in virtue we grow conscious of a presence; in sin we feel the shock of an absence.

Professor J. Simpson, in his book, *Man and the Attainment of Immortality*, claims that from the amœba to man this fundamental moral issue between the lines of least and most resistance is discoverable. Progress in life is everywhere found to be the achievement of the latter movement. On pages 226f he describes the struggle for survival with their environment of successive orders of life and shows that at each stage survival is dependent upon the adoption of a line of development, arduous in the extreme because in antagonism to the customary life of the order up to that point.

We know how in human experience there are these two strong tendencies; one, the inertia of self-complacency, so willing to keep the line of least resistance, and the other that amazing urge to take the risks for a better self, which humanity, with the true instinct for reality, has called conscience—namely, "a knowing with" or "over against" another. Here, then, let me repeat, is the focus of the supernatural in our experience. This was quite plainly the teaching of Jesus. The

discovery of God is the peculiar treasure of that soul who, at all costs, will do right. "If a man love me, he will keep my word, and I will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him."

As Martineau has said: "Inanimate things cannot stir our affections; these are correlative to persons. If on doing wrong we feel the same tearful, broken-hearted sorrow which overwhelms us when hurting a mother; if on doing right we enjoy the same serenity of mind, the same soothing, satisfactory delight which follows on receiving praise from a father—these feelings are such as require for their exciting cause an intelligent thing. We are not affectionate toward a stone, nor do we feel shame before a dog or a horse; we may have no remorse in breaking a mere human law, yet 'the wicked flee when no man pursueth.' Why?"

Why indeed, if in conscience there is not revealed the presence of an absolute authority, supernatural, whose name nevertheless is love?

Let me commend to the reader the practice of interpreting virtue as the very being and presence of God. The call of pure love, of courageous truth, of a self-denying righteousness, of virtue unalloyed, is the voice of God as he walks in the garden of the soul, calling for his child, saying: "Where art thou?" This leads on to the further great fact that we must consider.

2. *The Fact of a Spiritual Experience of God*

By the term spiritual one means, of course, personal. There is possible to every soul a spiritual sensation or conviction of God's reality.

This is the testimony of the saints of all generations, and he would be bold to the point of recklessness who would deny its genuineness. Miss Evelyn Underhill, in

her valuable book, *The Life of the Spirit and the Life of To-Day*, has endeavored to show how harmonious is the spiritual experience of mankind the world over. It is possible, apparently, for the finest types of the human race at least to enjoy such vivid personal transaction with God as to secure an overwhelming and imperishable conviction of his personal reality. It was the teaching of Christ that the Holy Spirit of God aims at producing this conviction in the souls of men. God is seeking us even more surely than we are seeking him, and, as the Scotch proverb says, "where twa are seeking, there must be a finding." It is this "turning to God" in personal approach that is the first great step in the religious life. What we have said about the discovery of God in moral achievement must not be construed as postponing that discovery beyond the conquest of all evil in ourselves and the world. The great discovery begins to break upon the soul from the moment it turns resolutely to answer a personal God with personal attention. It increases, of course, sensibly and wonderfully with every true moral conquest. This is exactly what Jesus taught: "He that willeth to do the will of my Father shall know of the doctrine."

The fundamental moral victory is over oneself; it is to be found in the humble surrender of the soul to the service and the control of God. Once that is done, the center of life is righted and the circumference must follow in due course so long as the center is held faithful. It is well to realize that there is this moral element in our personal treatment of God. If it is reasonable to suspect that God is there, in touch with our inner personality, caring for us and calling for our

coöperation and agreement, then to neglect him, to be other than passionate and eager and patient in our response to him, is personal injury to him and to ourselves. Not until we have thus strenuously essayed the great adventure of meeting him have we a right to say that he is not there; that there is no supernatural element in life.

The greatest need of humanity to-day is the soul that has made this personal investigation and has discovered God for himself and can speak, therefore, with profound conviction. It is in this fundamental moral and spiritual miracle that there is to be found the best proof of the divine in human life.

What we want supremely is not a God who breaks the settled order of nature by signs and wonders in the external world, but a God who breaks the settled and impoverished order of human nature by signs and wonders of human transformation into the likeness of his perfect Son.

This moral and spiritual miracle, this work of God, may be known by each of us within his own experience. This is the challenge of religion to every soul, "If with all your hearts ye truly seek him, ye shall ever surely find him"; and with him comes within our reach that vast, that infinite supernature which is the inheritance of the saints in light.

> Speak to Him, thou, for he hears,
> And spirit with spirit can meet;
> Closer is he than breathing,
> Nearer than hands or feet.

Whether he works by miracle or without it, "he works all things together for good to them that love him."

CHAPTER III

THE SEEMING UNREALITY OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The phrase above, so aptly descriptive of a further real difficulty in the religious life of youth, happens to be the title of a most penetrating and memorable book by Dr. Henry Churchill King, of Oberlin University. He has distilled the wisdom of this larger book into smaller compass and simpler form in a charming volume of *Letters on the Greatness and Simplicity of the Christian Life.* The writer would like to commend these books to readers who desire a fuller treatment of this difficulty than he is able to give here.

Undoubtedly youth is frequently afflicted with a sense of unreality in its religious life. Sometimes this arises from the tendency, which still lingers in some of our Churches, to treat religion as an escape from real life, as a retreat from the worrying problems of every day. Our rather comfortable, hard-working, middle-class congregations often express their preference for something different on Sunday from the affairs of the workaday life. Their favorite text would seem to be: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." One can appreciate their point of view while refusing to succumb to the religious inertia that it encourages. This is only another and subtler form of the old other-worldliness, a subconscious ruse, largely, for escaping the difficulties of a spiritual way of life.

The extreme difficulty, moreover, of applying the Christian ethic to our complicated modern life often renders the pulpit cautious in its verdicts. It is scarcely

to be wondered at, therefore, that youth, with its proverbial impatience, suffers from a sense of irrelevancy and is tempted to dismiss religion as the unsubstantial stuff that dreams are made of.

It is not this type of unreality, however, that is the subject of this essay. This is not seeming, but actual unreality. Nor can one do more than touch in passing that other fruitful source of the sense of futility in religion—namely, an undue emphasis upon the mystical and the unintelligible.

There is still a tendency to take refuge from awkward questions in the mists of mystery. The litle girl who said that faith was "believing with all your might what you know to be untrue" was making a shrewder hit than she realized at much that passes for faith in the Churches. The rationalism of youth, though often applied shallowly through inexperience, is a sound instinct. It is the bounden duty of every soul to render his faith as intelligible as possible. These, then, are both forms of unreality to be avoided like the plague. They are not problems; they are sins.

The Real Problem

There is a seeming unreality about spiritual life, especially for youth, that does constitute a pressing problem. The life of the senses is naturally so vivid, the claims of one's physical inheritance so urgent, the new world of adult responsibility so fascinating, that the unseen realities of religion tend to suffer by contrast.

Who has not felt strongly at times the desire for a God who can be physically apprehended as simply and materially real as the idol to the idolater or the flame to the fire worshiper. Prayer so often seems

like speaking into an empty void. God seems so silent, so like nothing.

Here is the explanation of the common trend of early youth toward ritualism. There is a natural desire to find the verities of the spirit as vivid, as colored, as tangible, as easily apprehensible as the things of material existence. But it is far too easy a solution. It is the surrender rather than the triumph of the soul; it succumbs to the difficulty; it does not overcome it.

Ritualism decks out spiritual reality in garments of symbolism that can hardly fail to be clumsy and inadequate. It does not develop the subtler and more adequate artistry of the spiritual imagination

The Conflict Essential

Youth would be better advised to face up frankly to the difficulty of being spiritually-minded in a material environment. For it is in this clash of two worlds that the greater life is born. Unless the evidently preordained conflict between the soul and the body is resolved in the right way its purpose will be defeated. The very effort which is necessary to overcome the tyranny of the senses and sustain spiritual relationship with the unseen is vital to the health and vigor of the soul. And in the last resort none can help you here but yourself. One recalls the story of a little boy who thought he would help a moth out of its cocoon by carefully and considerately picking the cocoon to pieces. The result, however, was disastrous, for the moth was too feeble to enjoy its new life and speedily perished. Its own struggle for freedom was essential to the development of

certain juices in its new body which would provide it with energy for its new life.

Ritualism is an ingenious and common human device repeated in the history of all religions for minimizing the struggle of the soul with the body, yet in that struggle, successfully waged, is the only secret of spiritual strength.

Seeing the Invisible

Moral salvation in this world depends again and again, in a crisis, upon the power of the soul to image forth to itself a good that is unseen and intangible over against a temptation that is resplendent with all the sensuous and immediate reality of material form and present advantage. It is written of an ancient hero of the moral struggle: "He endured as seeing him who is invisible." How shall the soul develop that power unless it struggles for it; how shall it be lured to the struggle if spiritual things forfeit their nature, and become materialized? Yet if such supreme values remain spiritual, then how can the inexperienced soul avoid a sense of seeming unreality in them?

It will make a world of difference if we can get our growing youth to see this; if as they get the problem they can obtain also its explanation; if they come to religion expecting this struggle and understanding it.

A Purposed Unreality

God hides himself so wondrously in order that our joy in finding him, and his in being found, shall be greater, not less. He retreats before us, not that we may lose touch with him, but that we may grow the greater for our finding of him. Like every wise father,

he tends to retreat before his growing son, standing, as Browning puts it, "a hairbreadth off, to give room for the newly made to live."

We all remember the old story of King Edward and the Black Prince at the Battle of Cressy. King Edward was watching from a neighboring hill the progress of the battle, which he had left in the hands of the young prince. As the battle progressed and it was seen that the English were very hard pressed, the king was urged by those about him to send help to the prince, but his reply was: "No; let the lad win his spurs." And when the battle was won, as the wise old king saw it would be won, the glory was all the prince's own, and he was admitted to the rank of knighthood. Whether the story is fable or history, it is good parable.

Stretching the Soul

God's call to youth is a call to heroic struggle for the realization of greater manhood than the animal nature, resident and expressed in the body, can ever provide. The contempt, therefore, that youth is often moved to feel for the practices of devotion, for prayer and meditation, hymn and worship of a simple kind, is the height of folly. The soul must stretch itself to live, just as the body must exercise. It may be as fatal to work without prayer as to pray without work.

God's Seeming Inaction

One further aspect of this problem must claim our attention. Youth often suffers a sense of unreality in religion in the apparent silence and inactivity of

God over against the tragedy of human life. "Why does not God do something?" youth is tempted to cry in its burning indignation against human wrong. A recent writer, however, has eloquently pointed out that it is worth while asking the question: "Where should God begin with his active judgments? Whom should he condemn for the existence of slums, the landlords who own the property, the tenants who spoil it, or the nation that permits private ownership?" One does not go far in seeking a policy of judgment without finding how difficult it is to sever the responsibility of an individual or group from that of all mankind, and one is driven back repeatedly upon the necessity for treating the problem as a whole. A little deeper throught, however, will show that *God in Christ is seeking to treat the problem as a whole.*

Many a young Christian worker, starting out with bursting zeal to make his life a crusade against wrong, comes to grief on this fact. He finds that his piecemeal attack upon evil is like trying to push a dent out of an india-rubber ball. As fast as you get it right on one side it goes wrong on the other. Of course God is ever working, though so subtly that we fail often to register it in our senses. "My Father toileth," says Christ. But there is at least one great historic word that God has spoken and one great deed that he has done—his living word in Christ, his supreme deed in the Crucified. In Christ God has made a supreme effort at the reconciliation of humanity, at getting mankind—that is, to unite upon its common problem. Christ is at once God's great concession to our weakness as embodied spirits and God's great call to that at-onement of

spirit in which alone our common problem can be solved.

In Jesus God has given to mankind at one and the same time a perfect *historic* form to assist imagination; a focus and a standard of thought and conduct sufficiently concrete for our needs, and an invisible Spirit to know whom we must stretch our souls. Fellowship with that Christ is sustained by faith. The very nature of our task produces, therefore, the illusion of unreality. In the fulfilling of our task, in reaching out for Christ, in obeying his Spirit, though we see him not, neither feel him, the illusion passes away and his reality grows ever more intense.

Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of thine,
The veil of sense hangs dark between
Thy blessed face and mine.

I see thee not, I hear thee not,
Yet art thou oft with me,
And earth has ne'er so dear a spot
As where I meet with thee.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUPREMACY OF JESUS

Not long ago the writer was asked by a young man: "Is it not enough to regard Jesus as a great human hero, practically the greatest?" The question is typical of a difficulty that confronts most thinking minds as they begin to investigate for themselves the main positions of their religion. The answer given in the present case was: "Enter into real association with that hero and permit that association to lead you to whatever he has to offer." The writer believes that answer to be not only sound but valuable. The way into the discovery of Jesus is the way that was taken by the first disciples. Their relationship with him was, to begin with, highly untheological. It began, doubtless, in the testimony of John the Baptist, testimony of great value because it includes knowledge of the character of Jesus through what are called the silent years, and it was only step by step that the disciples approached their final and amazing verdict upon Jesus. How amazing the verdict was should be clear if we remember that it was made by Jews, by members, that is, of the most rigidly monotheistic faith conceivable. It was essentially a verdict based upon experience of Christ. The steps in the discovery were doubtless, first of all, the realization of an unique moral achievement and quality in Jesus. This rendered reasonable for them the increasing testimony of Christ's own counsciousness to his unique dignity. Finally, they felt that this unique dignity was crowned and

sealed from the unseen world, after the voluntary sacrifice of Calvary, by his reappearance after death. St. Paul sums it up rather remarkably in Romans 1: 4: "Declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." This is the royal road into the secret of Jesus. As was recently pointed out in a brilliant sermon by Dr. Norwood, we ought to regard the discovery of the deity of Jesus as the climax of the upward reach of the soul toward Christ, rather than as a *sine qua non* without which there can be no beginning of contact. We are not saved by the theology, but by religion; by the actual bond between ourselves and God rather than by what we think of the bond. Let each one come to Christ and live with him as he projects himself into his spiritual experience, and the end is sure. That is our contention.

The Increasing Verdict of the Race

It would seem to be in the main also the verdict of humanity. Christianity has made far greater strides in the respect of the modern world than is commonly realized. It is true to say that no one has such a grip upon the imagination of the race to-day as Jesus of Nazareth. If we were to examine the testimonies of great leaders of human thought, we should find this to be so. It is worth recalling such historic verdicts as those of Renan, "Jesus will never be surpassed"; of Richter, "He is the holiest among the mighty and the mightiest among the holy"; or of John Stuart Mill, to the effect that anyone desiring a standard for conduct could not do better than strive to live according to the character of Christ; or of Richard Jefferies, who, after

spending his life in the worship of nature and in the illusion that such was enough, called upon his deathbed for the simple gospel as presented in St. Luke; or the more recent judgment of H. G. Wells, "Jesus stands first."

It is becoming common knowledge at last that modern science is showing a rapidly increasing sympathy toward the person and teaching of Jesus. Professor Simpson's recent book, *Man and the Attainment of Immortality*, is a striking instance of this. In the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, in the article on Christianity, some remarkable figures are provided by the Stuttgart Statistical Bureau showing that Christianity to-day numbers *more nominal adherents than any other two world religions put together.*[1] Nominal adherence may not mean a great deal, but it does at least mean respect, and it also implies the exercise of a considerable degree of intellectual and practical judgment between Christianity and other faiths. What is perhaps even more interesting is the way in which other world religions are displaying an anxiety to rival the Christian ethic, to unearth from their stores of literature and tradition anything that has the least likeness to the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. The spirit of Jesus is undoubtedly winning; and if we cared as little for labels and other formalities as he did, we should be crying with a shout of jubilation: "He that is not against us is for us." In the ethical valuation of the modern world Jesus stands on the utmost height of human vision Godward. He is the Highest Priest of our humanity

[1] The figures are: Mohammedans, 175,290,00; Buddhists, 121,000,000; Confucianists, 300,000,000; Jews, 10,860,000; Brahminists, 214,000,000; Christians, 534,940,000.

on the very threshold of heaven. In other words, he is the avowed limit of our seeing Godward.

Christ's Own Testimony

It is well at this point to return to the consciousness of Jesus and his own teaching about himself. Let us adduce some of the elements in his consciousness.

1. *His unique moral authority.* It was unique, mark you, even for Israel. If Jesus is in the line of the best Hebrew prophets in his teaching, his authority is strikingly different. "Thus saith the Lord" is the watchword of the Hebrew prophets, even of the greatest among them, but "I say unto you" is the language of the Nazarene. "If it were not so I would have told you" is a phrase that sums up perfectly his consciousness of direct knowledge. Coincident with this is his evident conviction that he himself is necessary to human salvation. "None knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This might be the veriest megalomania in anyone else, but in Jesus the perfect sanity and exquisite humility of his life renders such an explanation absurd. If Jesus had been self-deceived he would have forestalled Mohammed. His self-worship would have led inevitably to the taking up of the sword.

2. *He presents himself as the judge of men.* The present writer is assuming here, of course, the substantial accuracy of the Gospel records and the identity of such phrases as "Son of man" and "Son of God" with the personality of Jesus. A reading of the Gospels, unprejudiced by any theory, puts it, in his judgment, beyond doubt that the evangelists

understood Jesus thus. The first critics are probably the best critics. Assuming this, what, then, are we to make of the attempt in recent years to place Jesus in a Pantheon of the great ones of history, to range him in line with Buddha and Confucius and Mohammed, in face of Christ's own parable of the judgment? When the Son of man appears upon the throne of his glory for judgment, will Buddha and Confucius and Mohammed be beside him or in front of him? It does not matter how much we spiritualize this act of final judgment, we cannot escape Christ's dramatic assertion here of his unique authority and status.

3. *His claim to unique realtionship with the Father.* It is worth remembering that this claim is presented in the Synoptic Gospels as well as in the Johannine, though the historic value and accuracy of the Johannine testimony is now receiving greater rather than less respect. What one wishes particularly to refer to, however, is such a phrase as "My Father is greater than I," and those other passages that emphasize the dependence of Jesus upon God. There is no desire on the part of the present writer to claim for Jesus what we might term a cold-blooded sense of deity. Doubtless the whole matter was a very great mystery for Jesus, at least while within the limitations of the incarnation. If so, it must have been a mystery which had its elements of terror and overwhelming awe. If our more ordinary experience of God is tinged with feelings of trembling awe and tragic responsibility in such an association, is it any wonder that his spirit was at times troubled when he discovered that his relationship far surpassed in its originality the experience of others? What is quite certain is that in any distinction of

persons in the Godhead there would exist a mutuality of reverence and of worship. In any case this extraordinary consciousness on the part of Jesus has to find adequate explanation. So long as we limit him to the realm of the human creation, ranking him with the seekers of all ages who are groping blindly for a God who makes no assured response, we fail to do justice to what he said about himself. But if we regard him as the great answer of God, the Uncreated One coming from above to meet us, the created, who come from below, God's especial personal revelation of himself to find our seeking and perfect our finding, a special incarnation, then we come nearer evidently to his own mind and his own judgment.

God as Moral Leader

Finally, we may notice how perfectly such a special incarnation meets what is rapidly becoming the primary spiritual and moral need of humanity. It has always been, of course, the primary moral and spiritual need, but the modern world is coming rapidly to a new appreciation of it, and in doing so *the supreme spiritual crisis for humanity is approaching.* Morality is going steadily into the melting pot. The question that will soon become more insistent than any other is as to what inherent authority the moral law possesses. It is not unusual for us to hear frequent pulpit lamentations over the lost sense of the sovereignty of God in the modern world. People are daring to ask, for so far has our rationalism gone, what right has a holy God, who is holy by nature and because he cannot help being so, to impose moral conditions upon any of his creatures? What right has he to judge the right or wrong of

human life if he has never tasted its temptations, never stood within its conditions? As one eminent divine has put it, this objection practically means that if God has not yet become incarnate it is time he did. The democratic tempter of the modern world is demanding a constitutional God. It has been brought to that demand by the operation of a gospel which teaches just that democratic passion as something fundamental to the divine character. There is no other answer in all the world to this demand than that same gospel. God came in Christ to stand within our conditions, to be tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, that he might secure for himself the moral leadership of humanity, the full sovereignty that at last alone counts, the sovereignty of the Reedeemer.

CHAPTER V

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter. He shall bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. (John 14: 16 and 26.)

If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you. He shall glorify me. (John 16: 7, 14.)

The basis of what is often regarded in these days as the strangest and most enigmatical Christian doctrine, the doctrine of the Trinity, is to be found in the actual teaching of Jesus. The well-known passage from St. John's Gospel in chapters 14 and 16, the salient features of which are quoted above, would hardly have found a place in even the fourth evangelist's narrative if they did not reflect the mind of the Lord.

The baptismal formula, however, at the end of St. Matthew's Gospel, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," is perhaps no true part of the character, but is more likely to be an addition by the early Church, similar to the doxology added to the Lord's Prayer.

In this passage in St. John's Gospel we have something very much more than a ritualistic formula; we have instead a natural and highly practical reference to the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus himself, suggesting an identity and equality between the three that would scarcely have occurred to such simple manhaters as the fishermen apostles; and this highly practical statement is the only sure reference to the Trinity in the whole of the New Testament. The well-known passage in 1 John 5: 8:

For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one,

is very doubtful as a reference to the Trinity; it refers more obviously and simply to the atonement.

What we have, then, in the New Testament, are constant references by Jesus (twenty-five in number) to the Holy Spirit, and others to the Father and himself, which carry with them a strong suggestion of equality. In the epistles we find similar references to God, to the Holy Spirit, and to Jesus together, but with no doctrine of their relations stated or worked out. The doctrine latent in the assumption that underlies such reference is simply unformulated. This is an important fact, and it is true of other doctrines too.

The New Testament is not a compendium of finished theology, it is much more like a quarry yielding the rough, unshaped raw material of truth without which, of course, we could do nothing, but which leaves us the inestimable privilege as well as the high task of discovering the right forms in which truth should be presented. Or, to change the metaphor, the theology of the New Testament is fluid, the molten gold of truth, waiting to be poured into the mold of each generation's thought forms. The Church is led on to the continuous restatement of saving truth in ever richer and more satisfying forms by the living spirit of truth. As Jesus said: "The Holy Spirit shall lead you into all the truth." At the outset of such a statement as this, therefore, it is deeply worth while to realize that in the course of the providence of God, an age which is making the most thorough and painstaking investigation of psychology and personality that has ever been undertaken is left free to restate doctrine in modern thought

forms, and to work out in more satisfying fashion the implications of the mighty revelation that came to the world in Jesus.

A further aspect of this fact is highly important. The New Testament has, first and foremost, a *practical* purpose, and one that has to be served in every generation, however great or however small its knowledge and understanding. What a blessing it is, therefore, that the Bible is not the book of fixed and fast theology and petrified doctrine that so many have all too long assumed it to be! What a blessing that the glorious truth about it is not its rigidity, but its *fecundity!* The Scriptures are ablaze with a never-fading interest. To quote our great Congregational slogan, "God hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his word." Let us, then, consider the doctrine of the Trinity firstly in its origin, then in its classic statement, and finally in its practical values.

1. *The doctrine of the Trinity has its origin in certain indisputable facts and experiences.*—The first disciples came to see that they knew God in three ways—they had been reared in a belief in the one true and only God. They were children of an age, however, which found this God becoming more and more remote, more and more awful, distant, and exalted. They lost sight of him behind tragic national judgments and behind the extreme legalism of their national faith. Then *they met Jesus;* and the majesty of his being, the stainless purity of his character, the self-evident truth of his teaching, and the royal confidence of his claims made them feel that they were face to face with the divine in human form. They really did feel that. Peter's confession at Cæsarea is the struggle to express that feeling in the

highest language known to him and his fellows. Jesus brought to them the most vivid experience of the divine they had ever known. But then again, they found Jesus speaking of another, not the Father, but his Spirit, whom they were to receive. Later, after the stupendous experience of Calvary and the resurrection, they received the Holy Spirit with astounding effects of moral and spiritual change. This experience sealed in an utterly peculiar way their devotion to Jesus; and yet, all the time, in the background of their thought and feeling, and coming to them with awful nearness by Jesus and by the experience of the Spirit was one God, known to them in the language of Jesus as the Father. Their experience of Jesus and the Spirit brought God back in vivid reality into their personal life. There was such a curious identity between these three that the thought of the one was ever bringing to their remembrance the others, while all the time the sense of communion with absolute ultimate diety grew deeper. The first disciples were content to register the facts; they formulated no doctrine; they sought only to launch into other lives their own wonderful experience. Their first aim was intensely practical. The mind of the new Church, however, was essentially active, as the regenerated mind always is, and the need for a theology arose inevitably as the challenge of pagan philosophy asserted itself. Doctrine was bound to come sooner or later as it is always bound to come. The faith had to be, as it will always have to be, intellectually reasoned and presented. The result, after much development of the Church's thought, was the classic statement of the doctrine in the Athanasian Creed.

2. *The Classic Statement.*—Let me advise the readers

to take down their Book of (English) Common Prayer and open it at the Creed. It is referred to on this occasion only for certain purposes. In the writer's view it is not to be considered binding on any Christian further than it is found to be convincing, but there are at least two things in it that are of great importance:

(1) The emphasis of this classic statement is not only upon the triune nature of God, but upon his unity. Athanasius took the greatest possible care to assert the latter. Nothing is easier than to sneer cheaply at this creed as involving the idea of three Gods, but to do so is the greatest travesty of the classic doctrine. Over and over again in the creed have you such statements as the following:

> And yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal.
> Also there are not three incomprehensibles nor three uncreated, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.
> And yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.
> And yet there are not three Gods, but one God.
> So are we forbidden to say there be three Gods or three Lords.
> So that in all things as aforesaid, the unity in trinity and the trinity in unity is to be worshiped.

(2) The word "person" needs careful discrimination. It must not be taken to mean individuals, the three persons are not three different people. Perhaps the term "consciousness" would get nearer to what Athanasius really meant. What he was striving to express was that there are three *ways* in which we know God. These "ways" must not be confused; each must be given its full value, and each carries with it the full personality of God. The three ways are in absolute and perfect unity.

There was a heresy called Sabellianism which,

playing on this word "person" as "manifestation," taught that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were three forms of the one God. This sounds all right, but the flaw in the idea was that the forms were *not eternal but transient.* It is of the essence of the classic doctrine of the Trinity that each "way" in which God exists in Christian experience is everlasting, yet together they are the same God.

Now, before the reader gives this up in despair, let him consider some simple illustrations taken from human experience that provide *analogies* to this. Our own human constitution presents several parallels. Personality in our experience is the unity of three powers—thought, feeling, will. Each of these is a separate living consciousness carrying the whole self with it. They are not transient forms of the self, but abiding realities, though stress may at any given time be more on one than on the other. In every act of thought, feeling, and will are in some degree present and in the fullest possible degree available. In every act of feeling the same is true of thought and will. In every act of will the same is true of thought and feeling. In every personality, therefore, there are three consciousnesses or "ways" in which he has his being, yet they make one man; one in three and three in one!

Another fascinating instance of trinity in unity is the constitution of man as a species. With our usual arrogance we men have called the race "man," but there is absolutely no reason why it should not equally well be called "woman." And what would either man or woman signify, at least in relation to each other, if it were not for the "child"? How indispensable is any

one of these three, yet how perfectly they must unite for "man" to attain his best?

But perhaps the best of these analogies from human nature, because the one that approaches nearest to what must be the situation for God, is that of self-consciousness. Think of yourself in such a state. The self is thinking about the self, but during the operation both of these selves are bound together by an all-pervading self. You cannot dispense with a single one of those three factors if the mind of man is to exist normally; yet they can just as little be severed from the whole personality, they are not *parts* of the whole self, they are the whole existing simultaneously and perfectly in three ways. *We cannot ascribe to God a self-consciousness less rich in content than our own.*

A further illustration is one used by F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, in his famous sermon on the Trinity—namely, the qualities in a material object such as color, shape, size. Each of these are three distinct essences of qualities in the object, and in the perfect and undamaged they will all exist together and form one unity, one thing; as for example, an orange; yet color is not shape and shape is not size, and size is not color. This is a weaker analogy, but it is from a lower form of being than the previous ones. It is one of the laws of being that, in proportion as one rises from lower to higher life, while the unity becomes greater, it is always the union of an increased variety in its parts.

That Christian theology is on the track of a great truth here is supported by the fact that both ancient and modern philosophies have been deeply conscious of the need for some such a view of ultimate reality as this. There is a difficulty in thought that drives philosophy

toward the trinitarian view. This difficulty was plain to Plato and to Aristotle. The latter, for example, in his teaching that "philosophical contemplation" is the highest occupation, and therefore the most appropriate activity of God, is forced to ask: "What does God contemplate?" God cannot be supposed to be adequately occupied by the imperfect, by relative and finite things. Aristotle is obliged to answer, "He contemplates himself," but there he stopped, he could not develop the situation further; and all non-Christian philosophy must come, in its reasoning, to the same impasse. But, as Dr. Illingworth has so ably pointed out in his *Doctrine of the Trinity*, to stop at this point has most mischievous consequences. For example, it leaves no room for the moral nature of God. Aristotle denied moral attributes to God on the express ground of their contingent character, with the result that God for Aristotle remains coldly aloof from real life, a mere abstraction barely conceivable. But to part company with the moral character of God is to render human morality devoid of a foundation. All man's goodness is grounded in the conviction that goodness *is* fundamental reality, an attribute of God. Since we cannot afford to do this, then we must agree with Plato that man's duty is to grow as like as may be to God; and that means to become holy and just and wise. But it is of the essence of moral character that it is *social*. Virtue cannot exist and thrive only in our relation to oneself; there must be at least one other for virtue to really come alive.

Consider any great moral attribute, such as love, justice, humility. Any one of these things demands at least a minimum of society. They are ways in which persons behave, but as one authority has ex-

pressed it, "a person is as essentially a social as he is an individual being: he cannot be realized, he cannot become his true self apart from society; and, personality having this plural implication, solitary personality is a contradiction in terms. If we are to think of God then as moral and personal, we must acknowledge the value of the Christian revelation that there is a plurality as well as a unity in the Divine Being. Thus we have arrived already at one great practical value of this doctrine. It safeguards the moral character of Godhead. But there are other great gains.

3. *Practical Values.*—(1) The doctrine of the Trinity safeguards the eternal nature of God's revelation of himself in Christ. The abiding power of Jesus in human thought and life is to be attributed directly to his exaltation above the category of the simply human. It was because men came to *worship* him that his revelation secured its adequate opportunity. It was because they felt that in him something of absolute and final value in God was revealed, that he compelled their worship. If Jesus had not been interpreted as of the very essence of the Godhead, he would have been treated as an ambiguous and passing manifestation of the Supreme Power, to the inestimable loss of mankind. It is really everything to us to be able to feel that Jesus is an ultimate revelation of God, that God comes to us personally in him, and there is nothing in God contrary to him.

Indeed, it may yet appear that no greater mischief has occurred in Christian history than the tendency to revert to the Old Testament Jehovah when the revelation of God in Jesus Christ has proved awkward and difficult of

application to real life. Has not Jesus too often been treated as a mere interlude between sinners and the lake of fire and brimstone?

(2) The doctrine of the Trinity perfects our practical apprehension of the power of God in our own life. We all need to discover God in these three ways. We know him as the *Transcendent, Awful, Final Reality* of things. The absolute casts his shadow over every form of relative being. The height, and depth, and magnitude, and complication of the universe are appalling to our infantile minds. What a pitiful object is the pre-Christian world under the influence of this form of intuitive religious knowledge! Its colossal sacrifice of animal and human life in its attempt to propitiate unseen powers is an eloquent witness. But even to-day upon the godless mind and the godless life there falls repeatedly this awful intrinsic fear of ultimate reality. It is traceable in the cult of the mascot, the charm, and the amulet, in the rush after novel forms of religious belief. The credulity and superstition of this highly rational and unbelieving generation is amazing and pathetic in the extreme. Such a knowledge of God, however, in spite of its element of truth, is not human enough for our salvation. We need to see God as so practically sympathetic with our condition and our need that he descends to a real share in experience of our solid and sordid earth, following us with his love through tragedy, and even red ruin; the companion for love's sake of all our human life that he may redeem and save us, not arbitrarily, but by the winning of our hearts! Even then, however, the salvation of a sinful humanity is not achieved. Our hearts must

yield to the mighty impulse to respond, to breathe back to him in ever-increasing love and devotion his Spirit until we know God *by possessing him*, by inbreathing and outbreathing him. Thus by these three ways shall we come to the saving knowledge at last of

> . . . one God, one law, one element
> And one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

Although youth is usually credited with a bump for happiness, it is a great mistake to imagine that it is insensible to the tragic element in life. Youth may prefer to pretend to ignore it, but the very intensity of life within itself gives a bigger recoil from the fact of death, and the very vividness of its sensations of joy makes it more sensitive to their cessation and to those of pain. It is a notorious fact that the mind of youth is much more troubled by the possibility of death than is the mind of age. It is essential, therefore, that some clear vision of the meaning of the tragic element of life should be secured by the soul of youth. Otherwise that most tragic of all conditions may arise in which youth turns cynic and behind a mask of smiling bravado hides a deep-seated canker of pessimism. The nerve of action in such a life atrophies, and the soul drifts before the varying winds of circumstance.

Face the Facts

Christianity, while it holds out the fair hope of an ultimately sorrowless world, makes no attempt to deny or to minimize the fact of suffering. It does not say that suffering is unreal, or that it is due largely to the projected sympathy of the onlooker; rather cheap modern devices for escaping from the problem. It states the problem at its worst, and youth will do well to make an earnest attempt to really envisage the terrific tragedy of human experience. The present

writer would advise his readers to get hold of Wynwarde Read's *The Martyrdom of Man* and read it. It will not be a pleasant experience, but while one is facing this problem one might as well really face it, especially in view of that well-known fact that extremes meet. If we strive to get to the end of our problem we may end our problem. That is certainly the effect produced by Mr. Read's terrific book. He gathers together the toll of human woe as completely as possible. He tells us of the pitiful struggles of drift man, of the age-long struggle of humanity with nature and with beasts of prey, of the story of human wars and the hell that lust can make of this fair earth. He records the horrible iniquities perpetrated in the name of religion. He tears the cloak from humanity everywhere to show the grinning skeleton of ever-triumphant death. As you read the story, a midnight of horror descends upon your soul, and you are prepared for the author's conclusion that the indictment of God's goodness is fairly complete. But do not succumb to first impressions. Wait and think patiently and the horror will lift from the soul, a rift will appear in the cloud. The darkest hour is always before dawn. And as you wait and think patiently, something rises within your soul to utter again the eternal song of hope. You begin to realize that the author's solution is too easy to arrive at and too hard to retain. So great a tragedy is too great not to have some wonderful meaning. So great a price can be paid only for some prize of infinite worth. The human mind simply refuses as impossible an end so truly absurd and irrational to suffering so colossal and sublime.

God's Whisper

After wondering at the suffering, you begin to wonder at the survival, and there is built up in your mind an irresistible suggestion of merit in virtue of such pain. This is an inevitable accompaniment of great suffering. One would think that it would crush and depress. It does often for a time, but seldom permanently for the soul that endures. A feeling arises in the mind of a distinct claim upon the nature of things for compensation, for reward, for the things for which the price has been paid. And there is no other explanation of man's successful persistence through all his age long martyrdom than that the hope which springs eternal in the human breast is God's own whisper to the soul that all is well.

Those instinctive hopes find wonderful ratification objectively in the story of Jesus.

Jesus risked everything, including the purest ideal for human society ever entertained by the mind of man, upon the essential goodness of reality. It is this fact that makes the story of Jesus at once the blackest tragedy and the brightest hope of human history. "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth . . . yet he made his grave with the wicked." Could human folly reach a higher height than in his rejection? Could human sin achieve a greater triumph than in his destruction? Could disappointment and disillusion ever find so pure a victim? The Idealist of idealists is betrayed, scourged, crucified by the most highly privileged people, spiritually and morally, known to history! Could the irony of existence ever provide a finer instance for the cynic's rejoicing? *Yet to-day the world is coming increasingly*

into the grip of this Christ! "The stone which the builders rejected . . . the same is made the head of the corner." "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

Here is overwhelming defeat, as the world defines it, blossoming into perfect victory.

> O cross that liftest up my head
> I dare not ask to fly from thee,
> I lay in dust, life's glory dead,
> But from the ground their blossoms red,
> Life that shall endless be.

No Mere Spectator God

The significance of this revelation in a suffering Christ is that it gives the lie once for all to the idea of a God who is an outside spectator of human misery. Jesus, by whom alone we have the right to judge the unseen God, reveals to us one who focuses upon himself all the pain of mankind, who indeed feels it before they do, being himself the very origin of feeling itself, seeing that "in him we live and move and have our being." Our pain is part of his always. He calls upon us to bear nothing he himself does not share. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them." That is the ancient prophetic word, and it comes alive in Jesus.

What Is God's Will?

As to the relation of suffering to the will of God, we may point out that suffering is essentially a by-product of human activity. God's will is the perfection of the race, but such a purpose demands the observance of certain fundamental principles, and suffering in a

certain degree in the cost of such observance. In a further degree it is the cost of failing in such observance. As Dr. Fosdick has pointed out in *The Meaning of Faith*, there are four great principles of human well-being, each of which carries with it this by-product of suffering. These principles are:

1. *The system of regular law which is the basis of the world.* We certainly could never dispense with that. It is the very trustworthiness of nature's regular course that allows of humanity's developing life. Yet again and again its rigidity demands sacrifice from individuals and even masses of humanity.

2. *Progress.* Who of us desires to stand still? Yet to grow and pass on means all the pain of parting, the grief of temporary loss, as in death. It means also the clash of generations, as depicted, for example, so forcibly in Arnold Bennett's *Milestones*. It means birth pangs of new eras, the breakdown of old conditions and conventions.

3. *Fredom.* Who does not cherish liberty? Yet this demands the power to experiment and learn for oneself. It means that the pace of progress cannot be forced, and that patience must become one of the supreme virtues of all who teach. Yet the very meaning of the word patience implies suffering.

4. *Love.* The great communal passion of humanity. Who would part from love? Yet it means the strong helping and waiting for the weak, the good forgiving and bearing the sin of the wicked. It means Calvary and Gethsemane for God and man. Nothing is so costly as the supreme good, love.

The way to the ultimate and eternal good is a *via dolorosa*. But the way is not the will, the journey

is not the goal. The end is the will, the beautiful will of God, and that end is a kingdom of humanity possessed of the sinless, sorrowless, deathless bliss of God, who himself suffers only for that end.

A Solution by Action

It is not only a solution by faith that Christ provides, but a solution by action. For any soul that insistently contemplates Jesus in his supreme sacrifice finds it difficult to avoid responding to his leadership, and Jesus leads to the overcoming of sorrow. Jesus gives to men a new spirit in their suffering, a nobler courage, a deliverance from self. As the writer once heard an avowed agnostic declare: "When I come to die, the thought of Jesus will make it easier for me." Certainly he gives to his disciples a sense of divine companionship in their sufferings. The highest and best comes to us not immune from the tragedy, but as the Man of sorrows; not as some gay Apollo god of easy good furtune, but as a God of courageous sacrifice, bearing that hall mark of deity described by Browning:

> I think this is the authentic sign and seal of Godhead,
> That it ever waxes glad and yet more glad
> Till it blossoms, bursts into a rage,
> To suffer for mankind and recommence at sorrow.

When man raises the pitiful cry, "What profit is there in my blood?" God answers us in Christ by showing us his own blood shed freely for his great all-compensating purpose. He checks our eagerness to escape from pain by his own example of heroic endurance.

Here is the only immediate solution of the problem of human suffering. Christ came, lived, died for one

great redeeming purpose, to awaken love in every human heart, that spirit which alone will make fullest sacrifice for others' sake. In that spirit lies our only escape from tragedy. When all shall become eager to suffer for the rest, then shall humanity lift its burden unitedly and none be crushed again by an unequal weight. The spirit of self-seeking creates our problem. The spirit of Christ, the Saviour, solves our problem. His way of the cross is the only way to a sorrowless world. Put this spirit into the bearing of your own personal griefs. Take them as Christ's call to you to come into the fellowship of his sufferings, and see if the divine whisper in your heart does not grow more clear and emphatic. See if you do not discover the wisdom of those lines:

> Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
> Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth;
> For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
> And whoso suffers most hath most to give.

Heroes All

The Christian solution is obviously, therefore, no cheap and easy one. It holds out no hope of immediate delivery from suffering. It seeks rather to destroy our cowardice in the midst of suffering and to develop to the fullest extent our heroism. The modern increase in the desire for miraculous deliverance from suffering must be indulged with some restraint. Whatever of truth there may be in it will be realized, not sacrificed, by the truly heroic soul, but it cannot be too emphatically stated that only in the heroic spirit is there immediate solution. And we should endeavor to interpret all apparently purposeless suffer-

ing in the light of the redeeming efficacy of the cross of Christ. Take for example the cruelties of disease. The most frank and honest attitude toward these is to accept them as instances of the rigidity with which God holds together cause and effect in our human experience. It is not his habit to intervene between cause and effect. But if the cause operates, the consequence must result and may be shared by perfectly innocent people, and such cases are as truly martyrdoms for principle's sake as any that ever occurred in the arenas of Rome or the fires of Smithfield. They are martyrdoms to the ignorance of humanity, to the unfaithfulness of humanity, to the sinfulness of humanity, and yet to the well-being of humanity. They pay the price of an ordered world. And for such cases, often supreme instances of courage, there must be laid up in store the martyr's reward. These, too, even as He, shall "see of the travail of their soul, and shall be satisfied." Such sufferers are among the martyrs of human progress, and when they suffer, and especially when they suffer in his spirit, with his patience and his courage, their cross is gathered up into that of the Redeemer of the world. Indeed, such a heroic spirit begins immediately to modify the causes at work, reducing those that make for discord and suffering and increasing those that further life and well-being.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROBLEM OF SIN

It is a striking fact that the sense of sin is peculiarly native to youth. Investigators of the psychology of conversion like Starbuck, James, and Coe have drawn our attention to the frequency with which adolescent conversion is attended by mental agony over sin, real or supposed. The failure to rationalize such an experience, which is probably universal, though not always acknowledged as it is in cases like those mentioned above, may explain why in later life the demand of the Christian gospel for a deep sense of sin creates such difficulty. There is so often a reaction of self-respect, and something like definite rebellion occurs against being classed as a sinner. When Sir Oliver Lodge some years ago declared "the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins," he provided a slogan for a whole generation of rebels against that wholesale condemnation of human nature with which the evangelism of the past has been so marked.

In so far as this rebellion is aimed at the attempt to create artificially a feeling of self-contempt and inferiority, it is heartily to be welcomed. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Anything ungenuine is obviously unchristian. Nor can anyone deny that there has been in Christian circles in the past a rather nauseating cult of the sense of sin. Such types as were caricatured in Pecksniff and Chadband have done infinite harm to religion. The free use of such a thing as the General Confession has its dangers. Laura Rich-

ards, in a powerful little parable, illustrates the peril perfectly. She depicts a man joining in the General Confession at a Church service. Presently he is wending his way homeward and mentions this act of worship to a friend. "Ah!" replied the friend, "talking of sins, that reminds me I've often wanted to mention this little matter to you," and he proceeded to point out a fault in the man. "Liar!" cried the man in wrath, and smote him upon the mouth. Exactly! A miasma of pretense and artificiality seems to lie over this whole matter. Cannot we get to the real situation somehow?

The Reality of Sin, and Responsibility

No one in his senses can deny the existence of sin or its devasting consequences. Every one has had experience of a curious perversity in human nature which throws a glamor over ways of evil and a shadow over ways of good. We see it very plainly in other lives, grossly in some, but is it altogether absent from our own? Is there not a sense of bias in the soul, a kind of gravitational pull upon the human mind that makes it easier to entertain depressing and degrading thoughts than bright and ennobling ideas? When one adds to such intimate reflections the awful spectacle of the gigantic social evils—gambling, alcoholism, vice, social injustice, war—who can deny the grim reality of sin? But the reality of sin is one thing, the guilt or responsibility of it another. It is the sense of responsibility that needs to be restored for our generation. But it is as difficult to shut up the individual to guilt as it is to merit. When Homer made one of his characters say "I am a part of all whom I have met," he coined a great

truth and one to which the modern mind is peculiarly sensitive.

Corporate Guilt

Who of us can really call his sins merely his own? It is the word "merely" I emphasize. Not for a moment am I releasing the individual soul from guilt; rather I am making more sure of his condemnation; but it is a corporate guilt that he shares. Who among us has not been most deeply wronged? The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, not merely in sorrow and pain, but in the tendency to sin again. How, then, is it possible to take the individual to one side and say, "Now this deed is wholly your responsibility, and you alone must suffer for it"?

It is a dim subconscious perception of this great truth that doubtless underlies the rebellion of the modern mind against any glib and easy demand for a strong individual sense of sin.

The logic of the position, however, is not that no one is guilty, but that all are guilty. The best of us are unable to say how many sins others might not have avoided had we been better men. In so far as any of us have failed to fight with perfect faithfulness against the drift of degrading racial tendency, we are gravely guilty of the sins of others. The time is coming when the prisoner in the dock will not be set over against the rest of society as an enemy simply, but when, as it were, society will judge itself side by side with every one of its unfortunate failures, facing with him as a brother a common problem and placing at his disposal every means for its happy solution. In such a time of better understanding the General Confession may find new favor as the confession of the soul

which sinks itself in the race and speaks with the voice of humanity in general. The emphasis upon the social aspect of sin as fundamental delivers us from several common errors in religious judgment.

Sins of Commission and Omission

For example, it lights up the ghastly failure of the soul that deems itself good enough when it has simply eschewed positive actions of evil. So many people think themselves safe and saved when they succeed in avoiding glaring sins like debauchery and theft. So long as they attain the standard of average social respectability they feel they are all right and can pass muster. Almost the first thing, however, that Jesus Christ gives to the soul that sincerely welcomes him is a chronic sense of dissatisfaction, a feeling that it is anything but all right. The soul glimpses such heights of moral achievement in him, such extensions of duty, that a deep sense of personal inadequacy descends upon it. This is that conviction of sin which the Holy Spirit brings to the soul, and it is not something to be struggled against, to be treated as morbid fancy and shirked. It is the actual illumination of the soul by God's own presence. As one great divine has put it: "You couldn't see in the dark if the light were not coming in somewhere." It is not to be treated as God's curse upon you, assuring you of your lost condition. It is instead the first promise of his forgiveness, the proof that he has taken you in hand for moral teaching.

In this respect it is interesting to recall the fact that the New Testament always prefers negative terms for sin. The most common word means "a missing of the mark." "Lawlessness" is another favorite term.

But how inclusive these terms are. They bring into condemnation not only the actively evil personality but also the inadequate personality, the soul imperfect and content to be so. What heavy condemnation Christ visits upon the empty soul, swept and garnished though it may be, and upon those who "did it not unto the least of these my brethren," and therefore "did it not unto me."

As we weigh these considerations in our mind, does Isaiah's language seem at all exaggerated: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way," even though our own way has been simply one of self-complacency and nonattainment? There is no soul without the need of a Saviour from its sin.

The modern mind, however, does achieve an attitude toward sin which is strikingly and legitimately different from that of preceding generations.

A Brighter Thought of God

The whole question in ages of superstition was complicated in a dark and terrible way by belief in devils and demons and all manner of evil spirits. There was a world of unseen evil powers besieging the benighted soul of man, making it well-nigh impossible for him to do aught but evil. We know what shocking forms this belief took, the hunting and burning of witches and of many an innocent enthusiast for science as well. Seekers after knowledge were branded and even destroyed by the Church. In later times delicate souls like that of Cowper, the poet, were tortured and embittered by a chronic morbidity. The sense of human responsibility was

undermined, and many a soul gave up so unequal a struggle.

With such a belief, of course, we can understand how human souls were bound to succumb more easily to the darker elements in their subconscious or racial minds. It is not only because of improved and more humane law administration that crime is less to-day than it was. It is also because humanity in increasing measure has left behind it this diseased imagination, this cruel obsession and haunting by evil suggestion.

It is not that the existence of such evil spirits has been disproved, it is not capable of disproof with our present knowledge, and the writer is not disclaiming their existence, it is rather that a brighter thought of God has arisen to eclipse all such considerations, to strengthen human self-respect and render it immune to such invasion.

It has become the sorry fashion in certain quarters of late to decry what has been termed the doctrine of an easy-going God, but this emergence of the clear shining of divine mercy in Christ is not to be dismissed by the cheap sneer of ignorance. Anyone who will contrast the buoyant freedom of the nineteenth century average mind with that of the burdened, haunted average spirit of the Middle Ages will realize what an infinite blessing to mankind this clearer recognition of the infinite tenderness and goodness of God and the consequent optimism that flows from it have been. Hand in hand with this change has gone a steady improvement in the spirit, behavior, and moral condition of mankind. If "by their fruits ye shall know them," then the spirit and atmosphere of love is nearer

the truth than the spirit and atmosphere of fear, the brighter thought of God is justified by its results

The Origin and Nature of Sin

A further great modification in our view of sin is occasioned by our new knowledge of human nature. The origin and nature of sin are no longer quite the mysteries they were. We simply do not need now the theory of a personal devil to explain the moral struggle of mankind. It is obviously due to the lingering on in the human constitution of impulses belonging to previous inferior conditions. Somehow the individual lies rooted in the race, and racial history pulls upon him. The well-known phenomena of atavism, the tendency of the individual to approximate to the condition of its immediate ancestry, the tendency we all have to resemble increasingly our grandparents, and of reversion to type, the same thing in a more pronounced degree exhibit in glaring form this pull of our ancestry that in minor ways is self-evident in all of us. We have no need to think of child nature, for example, or any other type of human nature, as incorporating in itself anything intrinsically worse than the instinctive tendencies of the animal. This is the only sense in which we are "born in sin and shapen in iniquity," except that the habit of humanity inclines to the indulgence of these things rather than their control. Sin, then, we may say, to borrow Tennyson's phrase, is the "ancient good" of animal behavior "rendered uncouth" by the God-given vision in the human soul of the moral ideal. We know now exactly what humanity is up against; we see at last precisely the direction in which our salvation is to be sought. Sin is the clinging of the human soul to the

principle, right and pure in its own sphere, of animal behavior—viz., the principle of self-preference and preservation. Salvation lies in the choice of the principle of divine behavior revealed perfectly in the Man from heaven, Jesus Christ—viz., the principle of self-sacrifice or love. These are the poles of redemption as Jesus himself defined them in those memorable words: "Whosoever seeketh to save his life shall lose it; but whosoever seeketh to lose his life, for my sake, shall find it."

It is an infinite gain to the modern mind to secure this clarity of understanding where before the whole matter was cloaked in dark and hideous mystery. Souls in the unseen that still cling to sin may have their degree of influence, like all others, upon ourselves, but we know exactly now what our problem is, and there is a decided limit set, therefore, to their power of deception and seduction. Knowledge is always power.

Made Sin for Us

There remains one other matter, and that is the greatest of all. Just as in the problem of suffering the all-important fact is that we are dealing not with a mere spectator God, but with One who suffers with us for our succor and inspiration, so in this matter of sin we must no longer think of God purely as an external witness and judge of our condition. He has taken pains in Christ to shatter that lie. He has revealed himself as on our side against our sin. If he judges us it is to redeem, to illumine our own self-judgment. He is essentially the Redeemer God, and the cross is the evidence of his passion.

With Jesus set in the midst of our human history, sin in the race has its death blow. His sympathy was so absolutely perfect that St. Paul, struggling to express it, falls into the extraordinary statement: "He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him." It is hyperbole, but justified by what Jesus was. He never sinned, but he is willing to focus upon himself all that being sinful means if by so doing he may befriend the sin-bound soul and set it free.

No wonder that face to face with such self-sacrificing love the normal soul can only cry:

> When I survey the wondrous cross
> On which the Prince of Glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride.

It is not easy, face to face with Christ, to escape the sense of sin nor the certainty of victory over it by his grace.

CHAPTER VIII

IS THE ATONEMENT MORAL?

THERE is in the soul of youth a native passion of independence which accords ill with any religious dogma that fails to do justice to it. It is not mere pride which causes youth to assert, sometimes rather petulantly, that it does not need a Saviour; that it asks no one else to bear its sins, and that it is prepared to stand on its own feet and to take whatever consequences are coming. It is due rather to the mistaken fear of losing its own independence. There is the risk here of the gravest possible misunderstanding on the part of youth as to the meaning of Christ. If Christ is presented to the soul too externally, and salvation defined as something magical and independent of the soul's own state, then such teaching can only be expected to alienate the youthful soul. The way in which the doctrine of atonement is stated, therefore, is of the utmost importance.

A further familiar element in the constitution of youth is an intense passion for justice. Any presentation of the atonement which seems to violate this fundamental moral law must also prove a great stumbling-block, and undoubtedly both these blunders have been freely made in the presentation of this great doctrine in the past.

A MIS-STATED DOCTRINE

Such a keen observer as James Martineau registers this fact in his *Study of Religion*. He says: "Faith

in the human conscience is necessary to faith in the divine perfection, and this again is the only prelude to belief in any special revelation. This moral perfection of God, being assumed in the very idea of revelation, no system of religion which contradicts it can be admitted as credible on any terms, but the doctrine of atonement involves a plain denial of God's excellence. Theologians speak as if there were crime, or at least some weakness, in the clemency which freely receives a repentant sinner into faith, but how is the alleged immorality of letting off the sinner amended by the added crime of penalty crushing the sinless?"

How very wide of the mark must the doctrine of atonement have been in those days to call forth such a judgment.

Dr. Martineau is convinced that the great doctrine of atonement is simply immoral; that it presents an inferior doctrine of God as a being who is something less than love. He says the doctrine of the cross is that of an angry God vindictively punishing the wrong person. Where did he get such an idea? Hardly from Scripture, as we shall see, but from a mistaken presentation of the doctrine on the part of the Christian Church.

We can never tell how much of the modern indifference to religion lies at the door of this particular blunder. George Eliot, for example, records how terrible and repulsive God was made to appear by such teaching; so much so indeed that as a little girl she could only find relief by imploring Jesus to protect her from God.

In attempting our inquiry let us begin with the assertion that no doctrine of the atonement can possibly be true which does not command the full consent of our

instructed moral sense. As the apostle Paul says, "God cannot deny himself," and he cannot, therefore, himself break the moral laws that he has laid down as essential to the spiritual health of his children. If God is sovereign he is essentially a constitutional sovereign who scrupulously leads his children in obedience to the moral law. Whatever truth, therefore, there is in the doctrine of the atonement must be reconcilable with that great and obvious fact.

Many Theories—One Fact

Then we may recall that there have been many imperfect presentations of the doctrine of the atonement in history. To mention only a few of them: there was the ransom theory associated with the name of Irenæus: a theory so crude that the modern Church in its most orthodox forms would hardly tolerate it; a doctrine which said that Jesus was offered to the devil as a ransom for the souls of men, but the devil was not clever enough to hold him. For one thousand years that was the form in which the doctrine of the atonement was presented in the Christian Church.

Later we have the theory propounded by our own English Anselm, known as the commercial theory. Jesus made with the Father a covenant sufficing for our sins. Seeing that he was under no obligation to die, not having sinned, he had the power to pay the debt, and more than the debt, and by this surplus merit man is saved.

Later still came the theory associated with the name of Abelard, the moral influence theory, which speaks of the appeal of love calling us back to God —a theory which by reaction from previous views

rather lost sight of the deeper elements of pain and judgment in the cross.

There was the view of Calvin, which defined God almost exclusively in terms of judgment. He is the moral governor of the world, and the cross upholds his character as a righteous governor unimpaired. Yet this redemption is only for the elect. Very much the same view is elaborately stated by Grotius in what is called the govermental theory. The cross at one and the same time revels sin and acknowledges divine goverment.

Later we have MacLeod Campbell's sympathy theory, very similar to that of Abelard. One of the most famous interpretations of modern times is that of Dr. R. W. Dale, in which he presents the cross as the reconciliation of God's justice with his love, love yearning to pardon and so overcome sin; justice demanding satisfaction for it, and the cross the way out of the impasse.

About all these theories and presentations there is a chronic incompleteness, yet through them all the grace of the cross has been at work, which brings us face to face with the truth that the fact of atonement is more than any theory of it. If the cross of Christ focuses a great crucial act of God on behalf of sinful humanity, the virtue of that act is there in the deed itself, and does not depend primarily upon our understanding of it. Just as a father may make some crucial sacrifice in the interest of his little child long before that child is able to understand all that was involved in such an action, so we may think of God in Christ achieving a work of redemption into the knowledge of which the race slowly grows, each new theory being a

step forward, yet the grace of the act is operating constantly upon human conditions and the mind.

Jesus and God One

Further, we may go on to say that any theory which sets Jesus and God in opposition to one another violates the strongest testimony of Scripture. Jesus always presents his love to us as an expression of the Father's, and even in his mysterious agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, which we can only interpret as due to an overwhelming sympathy on his part with the sin-stricken souls of men in a spirit of expiation, even this is interpreted as a fulfilling of the Father's will: "Nevertheless not my will but thine be done." In loyalty to this fact the apostles are careful to present the cross as an expression of God's love: "God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly."

A Significant Choice of Words

A further interesting fact concerning the testimony of the New Testament is that we are never told that Jesus suffered instead of sinners. The phrase that is so continually translated "instead of" is one that means "on their behalf." There are two Greek words which translate our ambiguous little word "for." They are "ἀντι (anti)" and "ὑπερ (hyper)." The former always means "for" in the sense of "instead of." As for example: In such a saying as the giving of a serpent for a fish, the substitution of one thing for another. It is quite a common word in the New Testament, but it is never used in connection with the doctrine of the atonement. The word that is used in those passages

is the second of these words, ὑπερ, meaning "for" in the sense "on behalf of." Its meaning is seen clearly in such a phrase as "pray for those who despitefully use you," where obviously it does not mean that you are to pray "instead of" them, but only on their behalf. In such well-known sentences as "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5: 6), "Christ died for us" (5: 8), "Those for whom Christ died" (14: 15), "Thus just for the unjust" (1 Peter 3: 18), "One died for all" (2 Cor. 5: 14)—in all these passages the word used is the Greek word "for" "on behalf of," not the Greek term "instead of." Greek was so precise a language that it is incredible that the apostles should use words with such consistency without serious purport. It is almost as though they are seeking to guard carefully against such a crude theory of substitution as would set Christ and the sinner in isolation one from another.

A Measure of Substitution

There is one exception to this fact in the New Testament with which one ought to deal, and that is in the well-known phrase in Matthew 20: "The Son of man is come to give his life a ransom for many." This is the one case in which the world is "anti" and not "hyper." We must not forget, however, in this reference that the metaphor used is an unusual one. A ransom price is always in a measure a substitute for the slave so redeemed. On the other hand, it is as distinctly "on behalf of," and it would be a difficult thing to place the full weight of what we might call the ultra-substitutional theory of the atonement upon this one text. But there is the further consideration that it is no part of our purpose to deny a certain measure of

substitution. When John Smith died for the slaves of Demerara he died on their behalf, but also in a measure instead of them, because by his death he saved them incredible sufferings and indignities. Yet, nevertheless, those slaves had their part to play in coöperating with the spirit of freedom which inspired John Smith to die, in order to become worthy of their liberty. Similarly God's sacrifice in Christ, when taken home to the soul, does deliver the soul from the very worst forms of suffering, from what George Eliot describes as "calamity falling on a base mind," and to that extent Christ suffered in our stead.

Coöperation Also

This is not the whole truth; there is a very real sense in which Christ died and suffered that we might suffer. He calls us to be "crucified with him" and to enter into "the fellowship of his sufferings." His sacrifice is a work of atonement leading to an at-one-ment in which we have to play our part, honoring by faith and coöperation his mighty love for us. In other words, as Bishop Gore says, "Christ for us" is only half the truth; it needs to be completed by "Christ in us."

The Innocent and the Guilty

Two other matters remain for treatment if the atonement is to be seen as fully moral. We must not interpret it as imposed by the Father on the Son, but as voluntary in the fullest degree on the part of Christ. It is not a case of God punishing the innocent, but a case of the innocent volunteering to bear our sins--a very different situation. The suffering of the innocent for the guilty is the price we pay for a world

that is built for love. It is the inevitable result of our being related to one another. Just as only in one way can you prevent the members of the body drawing health or disease from each other—namely by severing them—so to object to the suffering of the innocent for the guilty is to demand the breaking up of the body of humanity, the severance of life from life, of generation from generation, the reduction of human society to a mere concourse of isolated atoms. Would that be just to beings who have been taught to love? We need to look at the reverse of the picture; not only do the innocent suffer for the guilty, but we all share the good of each other's lives. The guilty are constantly being redeemed by the innocent. We do not object to that side of the arrangement; we do not call that immoral, although it means our sharing in a righteousness that is not our own. The great shining truth is that God has behaved in Christ as one that is bound up in the same bundle of life with us, whether we be guilty or innocent, and honors the bond with his almighty strength and illimitable resources.

Accepting the Atonement

The last great matter is our personal relation to the love that streams forth from the cross of Jesus. Nowhere in our human story is there to be discovered a love so pure, so personal, and so universal. We may for a multitude of reasons doubt the love of God as he speaks to us through nature, through the world, through circumstances, or through our imperfect selves, but it is not possible for the greatest skeptic to question the love that dwelt in Jesus. It is a love proved in the great final terms of a "broken body" and "shed blood,"

and the one who proved his love thus is the first and chief witness that this love is God's love in and through him to every sinner. We cannot conceive of any stronger possible testimony to the fact that God, if he is our judge, is anxious only to save. He is on our side against our sin, and we may trust him without reserve.

CHAPTER IX

WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH?

In the providence of God there stands behind every soul in its effort to follow and serve Christ an institution formed expressly for the purpose of supplying aid and inspiration—the Church. How do we stand in relation to it? There is the strongest possible element of necessity in the existence of the Church. Given a religion of the character of Jesus, and the Church becomes inevitable. Nothing is clearer from the New Testament than that the will of Christ is for the closest possible fellowship among his disciples. He nowhere contemplates a follower of his acting in a vacuum. He everywhere assumes that the individual disciple is surrounded and succored by the Christian society. The splendid unity of that society is to be the hall mark of his presence, and the source of his disciples' power to convince the world. His words on this matter are emphatic: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples—that ye love one another." "I pray . . . that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe . . . that the world may know."

The Folly of Isolation

Surely it is the height of folly for a Christian to propose to fight a campaign for Christ entirely on his own! What should we have said of the man who had set off to fight the enemy in the Great War all by himself? Yet the soul that sets out in this life to

fight "the world, the flesh, and the devil" in isolation, despising or ignoring the ranks of the divine army, is behaving with just such madness and is doomed to ignominious defeat.

No Profession of Perfection

The joining of the Church must not be viewed, as too often it has been, as a profession of moral perfection. It is rather a humble confession of weakness and of the insufficiency of one's own resources. It is an appeal for the help of one's fellow Christians, for their fellowship in the new and better way of life. It is necessary to make this very clear, for no more mischievous impression has been made upon the world than that the Church is composed of men and women who regard themselves as the "finished article" of religion. The taint of self-righteousness is fatal to all Christian influence. The world has no use, and rightly so, for *Christian* pharisees. So if one is tempted to make those common excuses for remaining aloof from the Church such as, "O, I don't matter," "I'm not of much use," "I don't feel good enough to join," one may rest assured that here is a reason, not for remaining outside, but for membership of the sacred body. The Church can well spare the people who consider themselves fit and worthy! What she does urgently need are the people who feel sincerely that they must cry: "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Unworthy Members

For one thing such folk, deeply conscious of their own spiritual lack and need, will not fall victims to that other common argument that the Church

is not worth joining because so many of its members are so inconsistent. One is amazed at the temerity with which people can charge other souls with inconsistency in total ignorance of their temptations and conditions! It is well to remember the sharp rebuke of a choleric saint to a phlegmatic youth who dared on one occasion to rebuke him for his lapse into anger. "Sir," he cried, "I control more temper in five minutes than you have felt in your lifetime." Scotland's favorite poet offers us a timely rebuke to this censorious spirit:

> But at the balance let's be mute,
> We never can adjust it,
> The ills that's done we may compute,
> But know not what's resisted.

It Must Be Divine!

Boccaccio, in his famous Decameron stories, tells one of a Jew who lived in Paris in the Middle Ages. This Jew had one particular friend who was a Christian and who endeavored by continual argument to persuade him to change his faith and to enter the Christian Church. At last the Jew, plagued beyond endurance by the Christian's overtures, made a curious decision. "Look here!" he said, "I'm going to Rome, the headquarters of your religious faith. There I will watch the life of the Christians, and if I am convinced that your religion is the true one, I will become a Christian." The friend went home with a heavy heart, quite certain that the Jew had chosen a course which could not possibly result in a favorable view of Christianity. The period was very corrupt, and the representatives of Christianity in Rome were at that time, to tell the

truth, a "merry crew" as the world counts merriment. Anxiously he awaited the Jew's return and the outburst of scorn that would follow.

To his utter amazement his Jewish friend, upon returning, presented himself for Christian baptism. "But you have been to Rome?" the Christian asked. "Yes, indeed I have," replied the Jew. "Have you seen ———?" "O yes!" said the Jew, rather hotly. "I have seen it all and this is my judgment: *If your religion can stand that kind of thing and keep going, then it must be divine!*"

When tempted to condemn the Church remember that story. Is not the continuity of the Church amazing in view of unfaithfulness within as well as antagonism without? The Divine forgiveness has never failed her! The Church has always possessed an inmost soul of purity which has continually given rise to impulses of revival and self-reformation. This is, in large measure, the explanation of her present disunited condition. She is unravelling the tangled skein of a big blunder perpetrated in the third and fourth centuries of her career when she adapted her constitution to the autocratic model of the world, accepting the patronage and orders of Imperial Rome, instead of holding by the free principles of the kingdom of God. She is like a clock that has been put together wrongly, and will not go properly. Her parts have been increasingly dissembled that they might be thoroughly overhauled. She is in progress now of self-examination and reassembling her parts for a new "putting together"; this time, we trust, to tell the right time at last, to manifest the whole truth! This is the truth about the reformation and modern denominationalism. It has been a necessary

process in reforming the Church and in explicating her true nature. The new and freer unity toward which we are slowly but surely moving may well be the final and perfect constitution of God's great instrument of world redemption.

The Mind of Christ

Let us, then, inquire again into Christ's idea of his Church. Let us recall those thrilling words of his in reply to Peter's confession: "And upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!" What royal confidence! Could there be a stronger prophecy of victory? Is not his will plain? Can a disciple longer hold aloof from an adventure so tremendous, a cause so splendid, a prospect so alluring?

The Ideal Society

What precisely is the purpose of the Church? St. Paul terms it the body of Christ, and the metaphor is very suggestive. The purpose of a man's body is to make his spirit felt and known; it is a vehicle of expression. So the Church exists to make Christ visible to the world. And it is characteristic of the Spirit of God in Christ that it cannot be expressed save in a social relationship. God is love, Christ is love, and love can only be rendered visible in the actions and reactions of persons with persons in their mutual intercourse and forbearance and service. The spirit of human love becomes visible in the institution of the home. The spirit of divine love becomes manifest in the institution of the Church. Undoubtedly this is the significant idea underlying St. Paul's other great metaphor of the building or temple. The Church is to be built up

into a habitation of God through the Spirit, it is to render him visibly present in the beauty of a perfectly related fellowship, a perfectly organized society.

This calls for the utmost devotion of all who join the body of Christ to its essential threefold mission of realizing and manifesting the mind of Christ (truth), the heart of Christ (love), the will of Christ (right), that he may be made personally visible and dominant in the world.

An Ideal of Truth

Christian men and women should be extremely concerned about their present failure to think alike. There is but one mind that matters supremely to Christian people, and they aspire to share that mind. They ought, therefore, to expect to find a greater unanimity of thought and conviction in the Church. We are at present terribly afraid of this problem. We are perpetually shirking issues instead of bravely testing the earnestness of our fellowship by "speaking the truth in love." We need to retrieve the gentle art of agreeable disagreement. The way to this is for us all to be passionately set on realizing the mind of Christ and to expect his mind to reveal itself through our fellow members. Such a real respect for each other as possible channels of divine truth would lead to a harmony of spirit which would hold firm beneath all differences of opinion and judgment.

The Consecration of Our Differences

St. Paul has a very naïve word in 1 Corinthians 11:19: "There must, of necessity, be difference of opinion (heresies) among you, in order that it may be plainly seen who are the men of sterling worth among you.

The differences are there to help, not to hinder. They reveal minds which, because they will not easily conform, provide a test for truth and which, when not merely stubborn, are a guarantee of honesty of conviction.

Instead of being afraid of our differences, then, we should rather welcome them as possible sources of illumination. Thus, sitting more loosely to our own points of view and reaching out in earnest endeavor to appreciate others' views, we should secure a more adequate opportunity for the realization of truth. We should be dragged no longer at the heels of the secular press and popular opinion, but should win back that independence of judgment and of conduct which alone befits the Church of Christ and which alone can give it the moral and spiritual leadership of the world.

An Ideal of Love

But further, to join a Christian Church is to give your heart's best love to your fellow Christians. They may disappoint you even then, but you will not disappoint Christ. The Church of Christ simply is not where love is absent. "He that dwelleth not in love, dwelleth not in God." Love is the deep divine bond, and where that fails the bond evaporates, the Church dissolves. Such Christian love means much more than the usual kindly but indifferent toleration; it means positive service and interest. It means time and energy given to real fellowship, to a mutual exploring of one another's minds.

In this matter every Christian man is up against one of the specific tests of his loyalty to Christ. St. John, in his first epistle, makes this quite clear. He

says. "Hereby know we that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." He is not forgetting there that the Christian is to love all men. He is not setting a limitation to Christian love, he is stating a supreme test. If you can love your fellow members you can be tolerably sure that Christ reigns in you, and you can be trusted with the rest of the world. That is his argument. Church membership is a test of your Christian character. Don't fail under that test. It is comparatively easy to love humanity at a distance; but what can you do with it at your elbow?

Here is an extract from a letter received by the present writer from a man concerning a fellow Church member: "I cannot tell you much about him, you see, *we are not friends, we only worship together.*" We *only* worship together! One wonders how far such worship satisfies God. Ought not the members of Christ's body live in active friendship with one another? We know what torture is caused to the body when a limb of it "falls asleep" as we say. Are there not many such "sleeping" members in the body of Christ? If we fail in positive love and reverence toward one another are we not a pain to him? "By this love," he said, "men shall know ye are my disciples."

Salvation by Fellowship

The provision of this happy society is salvation for our children as well as for ourselves. The Church should be "the home from home," the divine foster mother of the young folk. It is in her they should find their amusement as well as their instruction. She should send them to the world *for nothing!* Their commerce, their science, their art, their education,

their pleasure, their character training, their friendships should all be *within* her, not without. To achieve this calls for some great and strenuous readjustments; but there can be no doubt that nothing less than this policy will suffice. The Church must become an *imperium in imperio*. She is the new skin forming beneath the old; she cannot grow both together. She cannot dwell in two worlds simultaneously. She cannot serve two masters. Of many Christian families it would be true to say: "They live in the world, and only visit the Church." The Church is not strictly central to their lives. They should, on the contrary, live in the Church, surrounded by its atmosphere and protected by its institutions and visit the world only for redemptive purposes. This is not to preach a new monasticism, but rather the building up of an adequate Christian society in the world, but definitely not of it; a problem of unique organization, eschewing nothing intrinsically good, calling for all the consecrated genius that our new Christian youth can muster.

Only One Place of Safety

It is still true that if a soul does not choose the society of the people of God it will eventually drift into a very definite association with the society that forgets God. Failure to centralize upon the Christian fellowship will mean that you and yours are gradually sucked into the mad maelstrom of the world.

A wealthy man sat with a friend beside the coffin of a dead daughter. Suddenly the sorrowing man broke into speech, and said to his friend: "You and I have been living for a good time. We've got everything we could during the week and spent our Sundays

motoring and in pleasure. We've put the club and the bank first, and my son has disgraced me and my daughter is dead! I tell you, there is only one place in which to bring up a family and that's in the Christian Church!" He had found out the value of the Christian society too late.

An Ideal of Right

But the Church is not simply for truth and love. These quests of mind and heart should make it the happiest society on earth. Full of a glorious and varied culture, it should satisfy the full-orbed aspirations of personality. But it is essentially a society for action. A man's body exists to carry into life his ideas and purposes. The body of Christ lives to express and to work out into life the ideas of Christ. Just as he "went about *doing good*" in the body, so his Church must become resplendent with his deeds. Her struggle for unanimity of mind and heart is directed to this great end—that in his name and with the power of his spirit she may act.

The Church has been in serious peril in the past of sacrificing this ideal of divine activity to its functions of worship and contemplation. It has subordinated its service to its services, its devotion to its devotions, instead of crowning the latter with the former. Indeed, one suspects that much of its love for high theology and its preoccupation with metaphysics has been due to a preference for the easy policy of entertaining ideas about Jesus instead of the very hard task of *living out the ideas of Jesus*. Theology has been found a more comfortable interest than the Sermon on the Mount. Mr. Clutton Brock has pointed out that the idea most often cherished

and expounded by Jesus—namely, "The kingdom of heaven"—is only referred to twice in the Book of Common Prayer, and only in our time is it beginning to regain anything like its due prominence in the Christian mind.

The Sacred Heart

Yet surely the heart of our Lord is bound up with the practical success in the world of his cherished beliefs and ideas. A man cannot surely be a Christian without the bravest endeavor to obey the teaching of our Lord, and the Church is simply the society which results from the attempt of Christians to give mutual succor to each other in that great endeavor.

The Church, then, is bound to be a society of adventurous action. It will repeat the passion of its Lord for the salvation and moral leadership of the people. It will love and serve and lead and die for the multitude who are as sheep without a shepherd. The Church's interest does not lie with the classes, but with the masses, and her divine power is never more definitely proved than when she can take of the people of the classes and make them lovers and servants of the people.

Only a Church with a democratic passion equal to that of the Father of us all can hope to find itself capable of divine deeds.

The power of the Church for corporate action, to sway and dominate public opinion, is far greater than she dreams. If only she knew her own mind and could act as one great heart! If only she were really the one body of Christ!

You see, then what the Church of Christ should be? Then upon you rests the responsibility before

God of helping to make her that. If you see the vision, you do not escape hypocrisy by refusing formal membership in the Church. God and you cannot get on together very well unless you love his Church and strive for her perfecting.

Decide, then, now to throw your whole strength into this central Christian movement. Do not be confused by her many branches. Choose the one that best expresses your own understanding of the gospel. You will not make a mistake. All her branches have their places. If the youth of our time will keep close to Christ's own thought of his beloved community and put its whole strength of mind and heart and will at her disposal the Church will soon appear "fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army with banners."

CHAPTER X

ON BEING A CHRISTIAN TO-DAY

THERE is a widespread conviction among modern youth that there is something intrinsically impossible in the practice of the Christian ethic in present-day conditions. Even among professing Christians one is continually meeting those who speak as though the Sermon on the Mount is too ideal for human nature's daily food. Dr. Herbert Gray, in a pungent little book issued toward the end of the World War, called *As Tommy Sees Us*, describes a group of five young officers, all engaged normally in city business life, who were unanimous that to be a Christian in modern business is impossible unless one were prepared to be an utter hypocrite. Can such a widespread feeling be without foundation? Is it too pessimistic a reading of modern conditions or too ideal an interpretation of Christian requirements? Is there any blunder in such a point of view? Or must we sorrowfully confess that it is in the main true? And if it is true, are we to unchurch all those Christians who are actually engaged in the highly competitive commercial system of our day?

IS JESUS AN IMPOSSIBILIST?

Perhaps the first thing to be done is to try to see clearly what it is Jesus asks of us. It is not easily credible that one so sane as he should have wasted his time and breath enunciating principles that have no relation to life and are best left unapplied. Jesus was no sentimentalist, but, on the contrary, a deter-

mined doer of God's will. The use of the little word "do" upon his lips was constant and emphatic. Moreover, he lived his own teaching fearlessly and faultlessly, although it brought him to the death on the cross. No, Jesus is not a visionary who airs sweet and ideal nothings; he is not an impossibilist demanding something beyond our powers. Such a challenge as he flings out in that memorable passage of the great sermon, "He that heareth my words and doeth them shall be likened unto a wise man that built his house upon a rock," suggests not only that he believed to the full in the practicability of his own gospel, but also that human life and society are doomed to disaster upon any other method.

The Failures of the World

The world apart from Christ has not succeeded so well in organizing its own life as to be able to challenge that belief. "Christianity," said G. K. Chesterton once, "has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and never tried." Folk who would abolish Christianity because it has not yet succeeded might with greater justice start by abolishing the world, for worldly principles have never yet succeeded in producing an enduring civilization. Every civilization history has known has gone to pieces and rattled back into barbarism. Why, if not because those principles which are so easily and glibly announced to be the only practicable ones, principles of worldly wisdom, are fundamentally unworkable and indeed self-destructive? Benjamin Kidd, in his brilliant book, *The Science of Power*, has shown us that the boasted struggle for life and its principle of self-preservation

at all costs, which a half-fledged science proclaimed till recently to be the fundamental law of life, is after all only "the law that governs the production of the individual." It was never meant to be, and is not capable of being made, the law for the building of society. A new law stands revealed, as much in nature in its social aspects as in human life, as the law of social well-being, and that is the law of self-renunciation, the gospel of love. When a civilization shall adopt as its basis this true law and gospel, then shall it endure more lasting than the stars. Now that is essentially the message of Jesus and the burden of the New Testament, and to turn from that message as too ideal to the world is to prefer that which is a chronic and proved failure to that which may be difficult, but does promise real success. Indeed, the average man of the world to-day can, in his best moments, be induced to admit this.

The Implicit Acceptance of Christ

To be a Christian, then, is to accept Christ as the spirit of one's own life. "If any man have not the spirit of Jesus, he is none of his." Life, then, has to be lived on the principle of self-sacrifice.

A Social Method for a Social Gospel

What, however, modern youth needs to see more clearly is that so obviously and passionately social a gospel as that of Christ can only be perfectly achieved by a social method and eventually by a society. The individual never has been entirely adequate in his realization of the gospel. Even Francis of Assisi, though he renounced all his possessions, was compelled to live by the world that he denied. He reduced his

claim upon society to a minimum and increased his service to a maximum, but he compromised by the degree of his sustenance and daily bread. Such fierce and utter personal renunciation was all that Christ could recommend to his first disciples and was the only method open to them, and indeed to the Middle Ages of the Church, for the simple reason that society could be affected then only by such individual protest and example. But there is one great and vital distinction between their day and ours. We live in the age of democratic government by popular franchise; we are citizens with a vote in state and city; we are parts of a governing body. The supreme way for us to follow Christ to-day, therefore, is no longer by the purely negative method of cutting the bonds that bind us to a guilty society, but by the bonds that bind us to a guilty society, but by the positive method if insisting upon the laws of Christ becoming the laws of the state. It should become increasingly clear to the modern disciple that simply to renounce wealth in these days is to play into the hands of the foe. The amount renounced is simply snatched up by the greedy maw of Mammon and goes to reënforce the strength of anti-social wealth. The method of blank renunciation is obsolete. For the modern disciple a more developed form of sacrifice is demanded, the consecrated use of his total resources in the transformation of society and the reshaping of its institutions according to the spirit of Jesus and the principle of love.

Sacrifice Enough

Now this means sacrifice enough for any ardent spirit. To make sure that one's total life is paying

toll to the purpose of Christ is no light task. It means a constant struggle with environment, with the low ambitions of others, with the great drift of convention and custom. It means an eternal vigilance over one's own motives and actions. It is a life for heroes and not for weaklings. It is intrinsically harder than wholesale surrender of property and position and responsibility. Nor is it a sound reply to that fact to say that it is a method which may be easily abused. So may every method be. The social aim of the Christian Church is not to increase the number of the poor and homeless by reckless casting away of material resources. Here and there, as perhaps in the case of the rich young ruler, it may be required as a kind of surgical operation in the interests of the soul. But on a universal scale it would simply play into the hands of greedy powers and leave Christian forces without leverage upon social conditions.

Renunciation and the Church

Only one fact could restore the method of renunciation to its primary place in a Christian's life, and that would be the organization of the Church as a voluntary communism. To take one's possessions and lay them at the feet of one's fellow members who are pledged with you to Christ is a very different proposition from casting them to the four winds of heaven. But even then the Christian would not be wholly delivered from compromise with the average level of society about him, for if the Church employed in its own commerce all its own sons and daughters it would still be necessary for her to have trade relations with the non-Christian commercial world. Such an organization would be a step in the right direction and

would remove by one further stage the Christian s degree of inconsistency, but till that time and organization arrive the supreme modern expression of Christian discipleship must be found in a constitutional and peaceful struggle to alter the foundations of modern society from the natural basis of self-preservation to the supernatural basis of self-dedication to the common good.

What Christ Expects from His Disciples

A careful study of Christ's invitations to men to follow him shows that he was anxious to win them to a spirit and a principle rather than to a code of conduct. He anticipates degrees of attainment, as for example when he suggests that some may well become "eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God," but that it may be too much for others. Jesus was never doctrinaire, never rigid in his program, but essentially flexible because spiritual, pinning his faith to the unfailing intuition of the Holy Spirit. He will judge us much more by the purity of our motive and the quality of our striving than by the degree of our success in achievement. It is possible, therefore, to be morbid in regard to one's failure to be perfectly Christian in relation to an unchristian world and its conventional institutions. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." If your spirit is crusading bravely for Christ, if you are striving with unfailing courage to the point of self-sacrifice to change the habit and temper of the world, Christ will not condemn you for taking your bread and butter at the hands of a world you are serving well. "The laborer is worthy of his hire." Jesus does not ask for a Church of suicides.

The attitude of the New Testament to slavery is a

perfect instance of what the present writer means. Paul and his fellow apostles did not fling themselves in violent agitation against the institution. They had no political purchase, no franchise, no social leverage save force, from the use of which they were debarred by the spirit of Jesus. They set to work instead to transform the spirit of the institution in the person of every Christian individual, and they achieved such notable success as is revealed for example in the Epistle to Philemon. Their method has great meaning for us, except for the great distinction between their age and ours already noted, that we have the added power of the franchise and can, therefore, address ourselves to the task of changing institutions more rapidly than it lay in their power to do.

It is only a truism after all to say that no soul can be perfectly Christian on earth till its own inward spirit is reflected in a perfect Christian society, the kingdom of God on earth. But that does not release us from the duty of being such Christians as we can be, not only till that consummation shall be reached, but in order that it may be achieved.

Are you content to be a Christian of the type of St. Paul, who did not hesitate to plunge into trade for the gospel's sake, though he had to declare, "I hold myself not to have attained or to be already perfect, but I press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"?

It is still not impossible to be a Christian of that order in the world of to-day.

CHAPTER XI

RELIGION AND SEX

A SURVEY of those points of difficulty in regard to religion which are characteristic of the experience of youth would be seriously incomplete without some examination of the deep and poignant interests that center in the working of the sex instinct. The significance of that instinct for the religious life is emphasized by a wide array of facts, the interpretation of which occasions much controversy at the moment between the science of psychology and religion.

Some years ago a well-known freethinker, Mr. Chapman Cohen, packed into a well-written volume a wealth of fact displaying the close contact between sex and religion and conveying the unhappy suggestion that most religions can be explained as an expression of the sex interest. It is not long since, in the pages of the *American Journal of Religious Psychology*, M. T. Schroeder made great play with the same facts for the same purpose. He described religion as "the evolutionary product of psycho-sexual perversion." The findings of the Freudian school of psychologists have notoriously exhibited the same prejudice. Sex is their master key to the explanation of almost every human activity, from the insubstantial fabric of dreams to the very art of building. This wholesale application of the idea has at least one advantage for religion in that it puts every other human interest—art, music, philosophy, science itself, in fact, all the manifold activities of civilization—in the same boat as our

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religious tendencies. If there is any discrediting of value, therefore, in this close association with sex, religion is not worse off than the rest.

The Power of Sex

While we may assume a certain degree of exaggeration in the sex glamor from which Freud and his disciples suffer—and many modern scientific psychologists indorse this assumption—nevertheless we have to admit, in the main, the truth of these facts. There is no part of our life into which the sex interest does not ramify. There is no male youth at least who does not know the burning intensity of this interest and its steady increase with the body's growth. So fierce is it that over a great part of life all things are viewed and valued in the light of this central fire. Nor is it surprising that if the vast energy of this passion is not vented in sex activities, it should become the staple element in furthering other activities of body, such as sport and toil; or of mind, and as art, literature, music, religion. Indeed, long before Freudianism made its appearance, some such idea had been one of the strongest arguments for continence and chastity in youth.

When, moreover, we glance at the history of religion, we find that not only in the mythologies of its earliest forms, but even in the theologies of its later developments, there is strong sex reference and symbolism. We may instance the sex relation attributed to heaven and earth in ancient mythology, the amorous intrigues and jealousies of Greek mythology, the stress laid upon virgin birth in Christian theology, and celibacy in monasticism. Mr. Cohen and his school make great play also with two other classes of fact: First, the well-

known strong sex symbolism in the language and writings of the Christian mystics, though, as Dean Inge has pointed out, they show nothing to equal the depravity in this respect of some Eastern schools of mysticism. Secondly, the now equally well-known coincidence of many Christian conversions with the romantic and sex-ridden years of youth. Professor William James, Dr. Starbuck, Professor Coe, and others have proved conclusively that the majority of religious conversions occur around about the age of puberty, when the human soul is flung into the strain and stress of the novel feelings and passions aroused by sex development.

All of which is very interesting, but of itself proves nothing. Everything depends upon interpretation. How are we to interpret these facts?

A Providential Coincidence

To the devout mind there could be nothing happier in the human situation than that there should emerge in our experience, side by side with the devastating passion of sex, the one power and interest that can successfully challenge, restrain, and direct it—the power of religion. Has it been a wise or unwise policy of mankind from primitive times to endeavor to surround the age of puberty with the restraints and solemnities and appeals of religious interest and ceremony? May we not assume that our ancient forbears acted under the stress of a well-founded, instinctive fear of the untrammelled power of the sex passion? If we wanted proof that mankind is attended by a redeeming providence, could we find a stronger indication of it than that at man's point of greatest need a strong association has been formed between him and thoughts of deity?

If it is imperative that the expression of this instinct should be adequate, safe, and beautiful, what better help thereto could be found than sane and pure religion.

One is reminded of the parable of the buckets at the well. The two buckets traveled up and down the well alternately. Said one to the other: "Heigho! what a miserable life is ours; one of us never goes up full but the other comes down empty." "Dear me," replied the other, "I don't see it that way at all. I'm always grateful as I go down to see you coming up so full." It all depends on point of view, on faith or unfaith. Here are those who say: "Bah! religion is all sex." But, thank God, we can also say, and this is the truth for safety and for progress, "Sex can be religious." Which will you have?

The Focus of Moral Struggle

That is no light question. The more we subscribe to the Freudian view the more urgent does it become for humanity to find redemption at the point of sex interest. For without doubt the sex issue is the main form and focus of the moral struggle of every life. The writer is certain this is so for men, though naturally he can speak less certainly for women. The imperative, and far too lightly derided, need for as much restraint as does not injure health, in speech and writing upon this matter, has hindered the full realization of this fact. The writer, however, is convinced and believes that this accords with the most experienced opinion to-day, that sin for the majority of men has as one of its chief meanings some form of sexual vice or illegitimate expression, either mental or physical. Unless the soul conquers here, its victories elsewhere are largely in-

validated. Self-control means the control of this instinct, or it means next to nothing. It is not without the gravest significance that increasingly the human type that has discarded the help of religion is the type that is now so often declaiming that there is no harm in this or that form of sexual vice.

Psychology's Dilemma

The science of psychology is itself providing ample proof of this urgency. Psychotherapy is busy disclosing the mischief caused to the human nervous system and to general health by repressed instincts (notably the instinct of sex), that is, by instincts that have found neither adequate expression nor sublimation. The way of health, says the psychological expert, is by transferring the energy of the instinct to a more sublime end, an end more comprehensive and at least as satisfying as the end appointed by nature. But if psychology succeeds in discrediting religion, where will it find such an end or such a power of sublimation?

Mr. Cohen's reply is: "In the social commonwealth." The passion that nature would direct to an individual or a family may be sublimated in redirection to society as a whole. If such redirection is not to break down into the most horrible promiscuity and free love it must be governed by ideals. But, and this is the final point, there is no reality in ideals without truth in religion. This means that we are back at the question of faith in God. If ideals—truth, beauty, love, purity—are to have any purchase power upon the soul of the individual they must appeal to him with adequate authority. What authority is adequate that is merely human? Even if it be the authority of humanity as a

whole, how easy it is to dismiss such authority as merely the tyranny of a convention framed by a majority. We already know how little influence there is to-day in conventional morality, and the reason for its emptiness is simply because people do not feel that it stands foursquare with everlasting reality. It is its conventionalism, the fact that it is a fashion blindly followed, essentially irreligious, not adopted upon deep convictions of the soul, which deprives it of the power of a true morality.

The Source of Power

Once allow the faith of Christ in God to possess your soul and power comes flooding back into those fundamental loyalties upon which conventional morality is built—loyalty to the unborn which shall keep both sexes pure; loyalty to the troth plighted in the divine name, which shall keep marriage inviolable; loyalty to the race, which shall preserve one's reverence for every personality. There is no power like that of true religion for cleansing the fount of life and keeping it clean. The writer will never forget one overwhelming illustration of this, for the truth of which he can vouch. A youth sought an interview with a minister regarding a sin to which he was a victim. After some conversation the minister said to the young man: "Look here! Do you really want to be free of this habit?" "Want! Want!" cried the youth. "You don't understand!" With that he pulled up the sleeve of his coat and showed along his forearm the ugly scar of a long burn. There it was branded in his forearm. "Do you see that, sir?" he cried. "Sometime ago, under the stress of sickening shame that followed my fall into this sin, I said to my-

self: 'What can I do to burn into me the memory of this shame, so that I shall know how I feel after doing this thing?' The word burn gave me an idea. I heated the poker in the fire, and burned that scar into my flesh till I all but fainted, that I might know and remember. But it was all no good, no good!" Before those two separated they were on their knees together, asking Christ to give to the youth a new and a clean heart. What all the resolution represented by that heroic act of self-torture could not accomplish, the power of Christ achieved. That youth was saved from his evil habit!

The Peril of Conscious Sublimation

A further difficulty that scientific psychology finds itself faced with is the interesting fact that it is well-nigh impossible to direct the energy of any instinct to a more sublime purpose consciously. The new knowledge of the mind may uncover the urgent need for such sublimation, but it is powerless to prevent the process becoming so self-conscious that there is grave danger of the soul becoming recaptured entirely and newly fascinated by the instinct's original purpose. The secret of successful sublimation is found in unconscious redirection. There is hope if the soul is really captured by an ideal, whether it be a personality or a cause or a sentiment, which draws the soul into self-forgetful devotion. In other words, modern psychology is demonstrating more and more its absolute need for religion and would do well to see in the Christian faith the crown and goal of its own logical development.

A Deeper Instinct for a Higher Destiny

The fundamental truth both for psychology and

religion is that conscience—viz., the urge for self-judgment over against an ideal—is the emergence in man of a deeper instinct than animal nature registers and one ultimately more powerful than any of the natural instincts. Men have starved for conscience; men have sacrificed all property for conscience; men have stultified their sex passion for conscience; men have defied their race and kind for conscience. The deeper instinct points to a higher destiny. Let man ignore religion and the higher call of destiny at the bidding of a science that is not scientific enough and his house of life, as Jesus foretold, will still be built on shifting sands and sink to disaster in the storms of passion. But let him in his self-expression make sure to express the deepest and the strongest that is in him—and in such expression he will become inevitably religious—then God will conquer, and in and through the divine victory man will ultimately discover a social order of life in which his natural instincts will find just enough expression to give him true happiness and to further his eternal welfare.

> Then comes the statelier Eden back to man;
> Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm,
> Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
> May these things be!

CHAPTER XII

IS THERE A FUTURE LIFE?

THERE is a period in youth when the problem of death exercises a peculiar fascination. The fundamentally tragic character of human existence has woven the strand of fear deep into the constitution of the human soul. Consequently few people experience a run of good fortune or make a conscious reference to their very good health without making some such concession to the gods of ill fortune as is represented by a feeling of disquietude and often by phrases like "touch wood," "not that I am boasting," or by the act of signing themselves with the cross. In a similar way the buoyant health of youth and the riotous vigor of its life carry with them the suggestion of something too good to be true, and by sheer vivid contrast the thought of death often becomes morbidly insistent. Added to this, however, is the tendency, present at some time in all earnest youth, to endeavor to visualize life and destiny as a whole, to see it all of a piece: and this, too, brings the soul rather sharply up against the fact of death and the problem as to whether anything lies beyond it. Perhaps there are few people who have not, in their youthful years, crowned their romantic conception of themselves with a pathetic and early decease, the death of brilliant and widely lamented genius, or of genius unappreciated and slighted till too late!

The Recoil of Life from Death

In all creatures the fear of death is great, and it is certainly intense and cruel in man. There is reason for believing that in the actual hour and article of death the fear passes; but up to that point it is the most poignant condition to which the human soul can be reduced. How is it to be interpreted? There is a purely animal and mechanical element, nature's precaution against unnecessary death. But for man there is imposed upon this all the intense meaning and sublime value that life holds for him. Man has much to lose by death: this quickens and inflames his fear of it. But on its reverse side there is a gleam of hope in this swift and poignant recoil of the soul from death. It suggests powerfully that the soul is not made for such an end, the soul is made for life. It is the utterly alien character of death that visits such horror upon the soul. If man were a creature of meaner destiny or of more impoverished existence and understanding, death would appeal to him in a much more natural way and would not arouse such fierce revolt.

> Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
> No soul that breathes with human breath
> Has ever really longed for death.
>
> 'Tis life whereof our veins are scant;
> 'Tis life, not death, for which we pant,
> More life and fuller that we want.

The Supreme Argument for Immortality

We are very close here upon the supreme Christian argument for life after death. Jesus gave classic expression to it when in his discussion with the Sad-

ducees he played so cleverly upon their phrase: "God is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." "Exactly," said Jesus in effect: "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living." "If you believe that God enters into personal relationship with a soul, then you must also believe that soul to share God's own everlastingness." Now this is the most fundamental argument that can be adduced for human immortality. Man is worth it because he is capable of becoming a real child, a real friend, to God. In man the universe has produced a level of consciousness which understands and appreciates life so well and truly that to crush that consciousness out of life would render the universe guilty of the vilest cruelty and stultify its own highest product. As one talented writer has said: "The soul claims immortality because already it is so great, so shot through with gleams of heavenly splendor that if its destiny were nothingness the universe itself would be a futility and a lie."

Consider the Alternative

We are sometimes asked to believe that individual souls are not immortal, but they contribute to a perfect race. We are not told whether the perfect race will be immortal. If not, then over the story of every man and, therefore, over the whole story of man the legend must be written: "Dust thou art, to dust returnest." But if at last a perfect race is to be immortal, why choose to believe such a destiny possible when all who have struggled and fought for that consummation might also be included? Why should those fortunate enough to be merely last in the process be rewarded with such a boon? It is only sheer snobbishness, in the last analysis,

which professes to believe in the perpetuation of souls of a peculiar culture, but refuses to believe in the perfectibility of all souls beyond death. Is not the love of God, as revealed in Jesus, without respect of persons, placing an equal value upon every separate human personality? Or shall we try to believe in the wholesale victory of death? There is no life after death! No soul has ever awakened, nor ever will waken, from the last long sleep! In the grave every human love lies buried—that of Damon for Pythias, of David for Jonathan, of Jesus for John, of Dante for Beatrice. Death has devoured all human genius—Moses, Isaiah, Julius Cæsar, Homer, Euripides, Shakespeare, Milton, Abraham Lincoln. All have gone! And when you placed in the grave not long ago the body of that one who was, and is, dearer than your own life, you gaze for the last time forever upon your friend! Do you believe it?

Live Your Creed

There is no surer test of any creed than trying to live it. It is a pity men do not follow the method more often with the creeds of atheism and doubt. They would find them out the sooner. What is the effect of living as though death ends all? There is the inevitable cheapening of human personality to be faced. In others—you are dealing no longer with something of infinite worth—its value has a time limit. For seventy years at the most will your friendship have meaning, and then it is snuffed out. Your wife, your children, sustain only a temporary relation to you; some day you will be finally rid of them, and they of you. In yourself! You can no longer talk of destiny. And as for taking trouble and making sacrifice for moral

character, why should you? At the best you will be yourself a better man; but you will not be more highly valued on that account by the universe that gave you being and now takes it from you forever. Your character achieves nothing of lasting value, for there is no value that lasts. Similarly, civilization and every other human cause is hopelessly cheapened by the victory of death. The march of progress, the travail of the centuries, the agony of the millions, will find no meaning or reward in some mighty consummation of universal human happiness and unending human glory. Like midges that flit aimlessly for a little lifetime over the marshy wasteland, so the countless sons and daughters of humanity "lighting a little hour or two are gone," swallowed up in a darkness and a void that is without meaning to them. That this collapse of all human values does not occur in every case where the soul gives up its belief in immortality is no proof that it is not a real and urgent peril. The human mind can be as illogical in its unbelief as it can be in its belief. But give such unbelief time to disclose its logical significance to any human mind and to the mass of humanity, and some such collapse is inevitable.

A Threefold Strand

We see then that the very existence of the moral ideal for man is bound up in this great hope. Conscience speaks for immortality, not only in its demand for moral worth, but also in its inexorable plea for justice. What of the innumerable lives that find themselves in this existence deprived of opportunity, broken on the wheel of pain and disease, injured in the delicate mechanism of the brain, lost in earth-

quake or other natural disaster, or trampled beneath the ruthless cruelties of war or commerce?

The voice of conscience as it speaks its demand for adequate opportunity blends with the voice of the heart. Is human love, the most exquisitely beautiful thing the universe produces, to be the sport of death? At the heart of every real love there is the thirst for life—the passionate, eager demand that it shall be not only for the space of a few years on earth, but forever and forever. As Elizabeth Barrett Browning that great lover, expresses it so eloquently in her *Portuguese Sonnets:*

> Love me for love's sake alone,
> That thou mayest love on through all eternity.

But still the chorus of demand swells louder, for now the voice of reason makes itself heard. There is an ideal of truth to be served for which this life is all too short. Shall we be apprenticed to the craft of the Great Creator and never enter upon our mastership? If an Isaac Newton can liken himself to a child picking up pebbles upon the sea beach, how incomplete must be the store of truth that the rest of us can gather. Yet, as modern science is never tired of telling us to-day, "it is all so intelligible as though nature desired to be known and understood." The greatest of living playwrights, George Bernard Shaw, has just expressed in his own peculiar way this protest of the knowledge seeker against the brevity of life's opportunity in his great cycle of five plays, *Back to Methuselah.* The burden of this masterpiece is that if man is to be equal to his task on this planet he must lengthen his life to at least an average of three hundred

years. But when at last Shaw's modern Methuselahs make their appearance, it is distinctly noticeable how nervous they become of the inevitable accident which at last alone suffices to bring them to their death. They are no more reconciled to dying than before. Three hundred years! It is a poor satisfaction for the inexhaustible thirst for knowledge that fires the human mind as it stands face to face with an infinite universe.

Dr. J. A. Robertson, in his beautiful and powerful book, *Concerning the Soul*, tells an apt story of Sir William Hamilton. When the great Scottish philosopher lay dying, his friends asked him about the state of his mind. This was his answer, uttered with failing breath: "Intense expectation!" There is classic utterance for the mighty demand that human reason makes upon life.

The Voice of Voices

Finally, if we turn from the threefold testimony of our own souls to seek corroboration beyond ourselves of our dearest hopes, we are met in history by One, wisest and best of all who have trod this earth, who confirms our hope in a twofold way. First, by his own unfaltering and emphatic belief. With what sublime confidence he assures his disciples of reunion and fellowship and progress beyond the grim portal of death. "Let not your heart be troubled." Who of us cannot repeat the famous and ineffable words of promise? To the present writer nothing is more impressive in regard to this matter than the desire Jesus exhibits for the presence with him in his future glory of his disciples. "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." Did this matter rest

only upon our own desire, then knowing our unworthiness we might scarcely dare to do more than hope against hope. But lo! it rests upon his desire, and he is confident, and in his faith we rest and believe and yield our soul up to "intense expectation."

I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

The second way in which Jesus confirms our hope of an existence beyond this present life is by his return to his disciples. However we may explain the resurrection, those apostles knew that their Lord was with them, nevermore to be lost to them. With his revelation of himself, triumphant over death, they received in an altogether unique manner the assurance of eternal life. In him they found that hope which is "the anchor of the soul" sure and steadfast, and we, essaying the same high comradeship, can find the confirmation of our hopes in turn by the sense of fellowship with Christ and the eternal world that we also may obtain. As we discover that Christ within ourselves, he becomes to us, as he was to them, "the hope of glory" beyond the limit of our capacity to doubt, and we are able to see at last beyond the shades of death that "inheritance incorruptible that fadeth not away which God hath laid up in store for them that love him."

PART TWO

Inspiration—A Miscellany

CHAPTER I

THE MASTER OF JOY

One of the most impressive distinctions between Jesus Christ and the other world teachers of religion is found in the fact that he alone is the master of joy. Beside the sad, contemplative Buddha, the somber, tragic figure of Mohammed, and the passionless serenity of Confucius, Jesus, as he appears in the Gospels, is a radiant and sunny figure. It is true that he has not always been so represented to the world. The cult of the crucifix, as the last word about Jesus, has done a great deal of harm to the faith. It is not fair to the popular mind thus to impress it with the superficial aspects of the divine tragedy at Calvary. The popular mind can scarcely be expected to realize the paradox of the intense joy that filled the heart of Jesus when there burst from him the exultant cry: "It is achieved!" The glory of Christ's cross is not that it is a spectacle of death or of torture, but a spectacle of love, living, suffering, but rapturous. The plain cross, therefore, is a more fitting symbol of our faith than the crucifix.

Show me not my Saviour dying,
  As on the cross he bled;
Nor in the tomb a captive lying,
  For he has left the dead.
Then bid me not that form
  For my Redeemer own;
Who to the highest heavens ascended,
  In glory fills the throne.

As St. Paul said: "It is Christ that died, yea, *rather*, that is risen again." It is a sad thing that so glorious a Christ should ever have become a fearsome figure in the sight of humanity, represented all too often by a somber priesthood and a dark ministry, with the keynote of gloom unutterable and profound. The traditional black of the clergy is a curious commentary upon a religion of life and light and love. No wonder that religion, in many a life, stands for the symbol of the irksome and the dull, while "the world" shines beside it identified with gayety and brightness. The Church made one of its greatest blunders when it permitted the devil to capture the "cap and bells," and pretend to a monopoly in the pleasant things of life. This consideration brings us quite directly to the first of the chief factors in the joy of our Lord.

Saying "Yea" to Life

He believed in life. Unlike John the Baptist, Jesus was no ascetic. Though a strong and stern disciplinarian in his own life, as witness such recommendations as "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out," he nevertheless looked upon life as good. He greeted the world as a friend. He rejoiced in the universe as his Father's house. His attitude to the life force was entirely without suspicion or foreboding. His joy was, in the first place, *joie de vivre.* The intoxicating joy of sheer existence which we all know at times, must have been supreme in this master of life, with his record of utter purity, with his energies unspoiled and unsquandered, his powers uncorrupted, his body, mind, and soul filled with the good health of holiness. No wonder his outlook on life was radiant, and that he trod the

earth as a conqueror, ruling nature and human nature with serene authority. The joy of action rioted in Jesus. He went about doing good and spent his powers to the uttermost, finding ample compensation in the sheer joy of such activity, able to declare: "I have had meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat and drink is to do the will of him that sent me." No soul can know true joy who is not a worker, and when the work is directed to the creation of happiness for others, then the joy of work becomes the still greater joy of service; and the soul knows how much more happy it is to give than to receive. Christ's whole-hearted acceptance of life is revealed in his constant use of the term: "I am come that ye may have life, and have it more abundantly. He that believeth in me, *though he were dead*, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Life was made to be a happy thing and could be a happy thing for the really trustful soul. For the heart of faith, there was waiting a joy in life that no circumstances could prevail against. "Your joy," said Christ to his disciples, "no man taketh from you." It is the saddest travesty, therefore, of his example for his disciples to look suspiciously upon the good things of life. It is not the use of the world that comes under the ban of Christ, but the abuse of it. Not the good things of life, but their selfish misuse. The attitude represented by those unhappy nuns of Port Royal, who feared to love the roses in their garden for fear it competed with their love of God, was utterly foreign to the mind of Jesus, who bade us consider the lilies as a proof of the divine good will, as a link between the soul and God.

No wonder that the bright activity of Jesus expressed itself in a strong vein of humor. We are growing more familiar, in these days, with these elements in the gospel story. Such a sentence as "even Solomon in all his glory," must have carried the strong suggestion of a smile. His caricature of the Pharisees as "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel" must have raised a hearty laugh from the crowd. His playful treatment of the Syro-Phœnician woman in which the woman's answering gleam of humor is identified as evidence of a pure faith is a further instance. It has even been suggested that when the disciples, furiously jealous of one another, inquired about thrones and crowns in the coming kingdom, Christ's reply was purposely humorous. He promised them one each, a crown and a throne for every one of them, an equality in privilege that would be doubtless no more pleasing to them than their equality in obscurity. Thus he gently chided their selfish ambition.

No one can read the fourteenth chapter of St. Luke, with its delicate satire upon the man who seeks the chief place at a feast without feeling that Jesus was a master of wit, a very blithe spirit. *This, too, is part of his revelation of God to be taken very seriously.* What would human life be without pure humor? Can we really think of God as dwelling from everlasting to everlasting in unbroken solemnity? Is there no smile upon the divine face? No lilt in the divine heart?

An old Scottish theologian was once asked if there could be humor in God? He very bluntly replied: "Mon, wha made the monkeys?" Perhaps there is no sadder revelation of our difficulty in really believing

that God is love, and of the extent to which fear has captured the human mind than this difficulty that we have in ascribing humor to God; but here, too, we must trust Jesus as "the express image of his glory."

It is amazing the place that happiness fills in the teaching of our Lord. The theme of the Sermon on the Mount really is how to be truly happy in life. The beatitudes are divine recipes for happiness. The word "blessed" with which they begin and from which they take their name is the Greek word for "prosperous" or "being well-to-do" in life. Jesus recognizes that happiness is the goal of humanity. He is confident that it can only be found in the possession by humanity of the Father's character. Only as men shall become really sons of God, perfectly reconciled to the Father, can they come to real joy and live the victor's life. So we come to the second factor in Christ's superlative joy.

In Whose Presence Is the Fullness of Joy

The second great element in the joy of the Lord was *the reality and depth of his communion with the Father.*

Frank Boreham, in one of his essays, declares that "whenever any part of God's creation comes face to face with the Creator, it bursts into song." He supports the contention with some charming illustrations. Is it any wonder, then, that a life lived as Christ's was lived, in a constant practice of the presence of God, was radiant with sheer delight?

Undoubtedly, it was this communion that gave to Jesus that joyous ascendency over the world, that deeply-rooted sense of victory which fills his teaching. With what delight he exclaims: "I beheld Satan

falling as lightning from heaven." "Upon this rock I will build my Church," he declared, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." As he approaches nearer and nearer to the great tragedy of the end and enters deeper and deeper into the counsels of the Father, we find this victorious joy mounting higher and higher. It glows brightly through the "Last Supper" in the upper room. He is utterly confident that his body and blood will be given for the remissions of sins. He leads his disciples in song before setting out for the garden!

Here, too, in this profound communion with the Father, we find the reason why Jesus was able in a way that is unique in human thought to achieve perfect joy in association with deepest suffering.

"For the Joy That Was Set before Him"

This brings us to the third great element in his joy. It was *the joy of sacrifice.*

The world seeks joy by running away from sorrow. We all do it. In fear of poverty, we haste to be rich. In fear of discomfort, we sell our souls to ease. In dread of the tragedy of life, we try to shut our eyes and ears to its sights and complaints of misery. The modern world is a realm of sharp distinctions between the miserable and the happy. As far as possible from the mean and wretched slum, you will find the well-planned, airy, pleasant suburb. It is typical of the world's ideas of joy. "O! that I had the wings of a dove, I would fly away and be at rest!" is the cry of the soul that does not know God's way to joy. It is the miracle

of Jesus that he succeeded in wedding happiness to the cross and uniting "the highest height of glory" with "the deepest depth of woe." Not in seeking to save our life do we find it, so he taught; but in losing it for his sake. The true elixir of life is to be found only in that blend of joy and pain which is mixed by the master artist—love.

There is no joy in experience like the joy of redemption, the joy that comes from uttermost sacrifice for a perfectly worthy end. More than all the pleasures of self-pleasing that the uttermost wealth might command, is the joy that visits the humblest soul when it gives place in its life to the passionate love for humanity that beats forever in the heart of God. The proof of this is to be found in experience. Go out in life to practice a true sacrifice for others' sake, and as you "do the will of God, you shall know of the doctrine."

The noble word that Tennyson puts into the mouth of the old sea dog, Sir Richard Grenville, "with a joyful spirit I, Sir Richard Grenville, die" is wonderfully true to life. When duty is perfectly accomplished, it is as though the whole host of heaven sings within the soul a rapturous melody, and when the sublimest duty that ever falls to the lot of man, the duty of winning by real love another soul to God or of opening up still further by real sacrifice the way for mankind to enter into the kingdom divine, then the very joy of God himself possesses the heart. "For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame."

These, then, were the factors that went to the making of the joy of our Lord, and he calls to us to follow him, until we, too, enter into his joy. When he washed the

feet of his disciples, giving to them forever a perfect symbol of lowliest self-sacrifice, he declared: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. If ye know these things, *happy are ye if ye do them.*" It is the recommendation of the world's Master of Joy.

CHAPTER II

IS THERE A REMEDY FOR THE PAST?

T. H. Glover, one of the most penetrating of modern religious historians, tells us that the striking difference between the first Christians and their pagan neighbors was that the former believed in the examined life, while the latter were content to live their lives unexamined; and in the conflict for supremacy that ensued, it was the examined lives which won.

Christianity insists upon the examined life and calls upon every soul to submit itself humbly and honestly to the searching of the divine Spirit. But to yield to such examination is, in most cases, to discover unpleasant resurrections from the past. Modern medical science is as insistent as religion has ever been that a radical cure for pressing ills must involve adequate dealing with the facts of past history. Your psychoanalyst, who seeks to unveil the secret mischief done to yourself in the past experiences of life, is only rediscovering the need, upon which Christianity has always insisted, for the forgiveness of sins.

The Tyranny of the Past

We often carelessly think of the past as of something that is wholly dead and gone. We linger over its memories with a sweet painfulness as over something that will not come again. It seldom occurs to us to dispute the truth of those mournful lines of Tennyson:

> Break, break, break, at the foot of thy crags, O sea,
> But the tender grace of a day that is dead
> Will never come back to me.

Yet the very yearning that such words engender is proof that though the day may be dead, the tender grace is not wholly lost. After all, it is the things that are seen that are temporal and pass with the passing day, the things that are unseen are eternal.

Science tells us to-day that light travels on endlessly, and could we but catch the images it carries upon its stream, we might find the whole story of the past throbbing on in endless panorama through the universe. Human memory may fail, though even that is doubted to-day, but "God remembers when the world forgets." The important fact, however, to grasp, is that the greater factor in any past event is not the external happening, but the soul itself. Whatever happens, the living elements in the occurrence absorb the essential character of the event and themselves carry it forward into succeeding years.

Your past is not dead, because it lives still in you; you are the chariot whereby it travels the vista of the years; you are its ship wherein it sails down the stream of time; you were there, you are here, you are your past, and you can no more escape it than you can escape yourself; in fact, your only hope of escaping it is to escape from yourself.

We all know with what tyranny this past, wrapped up in ourselves, can dominate the present. A. S. M. Hutchinson, in his novel, *This Freedom*, gives us a truly terrible picture of the past of Rosalie lurking on into the present, hiding in ambush to spring upon her when she least expects it. How impossible she found it to escape the consequences of her great initial mistake!

Have we not all known people for whom the almost forgotten scenes of the past have risen like ghosts from a

grave to confront them *now* with problems and difficulties which would never have arisen but for that long past blunder or sin? The past is like an onrushing tide that swirls about our feet and passes on before us up the beach, and we must walk through it for the rest of our journey to the shore.

Modern popular thought is strongly obsessed by this fact, so much so, indeed, that many are saying that the past is irredeemable, and such a thing as forgiveness impossible.

> The moving finger writes, and, having writ,
> Moves on, nor all your piety or wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
> Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

We are told that life is an unbroken chain of cause and effect; that to alter any one moment of the present requires the alteration of every moment of the past; to fling the tide an inch higher upon the beach would require a new universe from the first moment of creation.

Our Past and Others'

What seems at first sight to make our plight still worse is that our past is not our own, it has widened out beyond ourselves to involve other lives. What the past has made you has also had its effect and is now having its effect on other lives, some of them very near and dear to you. It is a solemn thought that out of your past thought and speech and action there have eddied ripples of influence that have touched and altered lives that you have never seen, carrying on your influence to the furthest limits of being. Others bear your sins, not you alone. Where are your com-

panions in evil or in folly of bygone years? They may be lost to your sight, they are still not lost to your influence. There is an everlasting bond between you. You and they are linked by the indissoluble. What hope, then, have we of deliverance from such bondage? Can the past be altered? Or must we be forever haunted by what we have done or left undone? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" These very facts, however, that we have emphasised are full of hope when rightly interpreted. Let us take the latter first.

Our Sins Are Borne by Others

It is a startling and terrible fact at first sight, that the consequences of our past actions are often very much worse in other lives than in our own. The comparatively innocent often suffer worse than the guilty. What is but a meanness in one life, carrying with it as yet a very meager sense of shame, may start a trend of life in another that can end in a murder. Where can be the hopefulness of such a fact? It is to be found in the oneness of life that makes such a thing possible. If mischief can thus pass from your life to others, then the righteousness of others can pass to you. The situation becomes a battle of consequences.

In short-sighted pride the modern mind has often loudly and confidently asserted that a self-respecting man will bear his own sins and carry the responsibility for his own past and does not need a Saviour. This is to ignore the plain fact of life to which we have referred, that no man can limit the effect of his own life, that, as Goerge Eliot declares in *Romola*, "our actions are like children that are born to us,

they pass beyond our control; they live and act apart from ourselves."

So far from it being true that a man can bear his own sins, we can confidently assert that the great probability is that somebody else is already bearing an unfair share of their weight of mischief. Now, in such a situation the evil consequences of one's life may be received in other lives with hate and loathing. We know how often this is so. There are, it is true, gentle mothers whose love is as nearly divine as anything we know, who receive such evil consequences with no complaint; whose love is so pure that it cannot fail at last to be redemptive. But we know that all over the world there are lives embittered by the apparent injustice of the suffering of the innocent for the guilty. Yet is there any life quite so innocent that has not launched some sad results of ignorance or folly or sin into other lives? Are we not all, to use a scriptural phrase, "shut up to the condemnation of sin," having come short of the glory of God? But St. Paul goes on to argue that if we are all shut up to the condemnation of sin, it is that we may be all included in mercy: the oneness of life that makes us suffer by one another's sins, makes it possible for us to be redeemed by the perfect faithfulness and the outpoured love of *Another's* being. In one life at least, in human history, the awful consequences of human sin were received by One who was perfectly innocent, actually with welcome, by One who was even glad to bear them in our stead. Whose only thought was that here was opportunity for proof of love, for attempting to save. One figure there is in history, towering high above sinning humanity, drawing to himself the sins of all; he bore our sins in his own

body on the tree, focussing consciously upon himself the shame and sin of all mankind, and surmounting it all and surrounding it all with the most perfect passion conceivable of love and mercy. One who, of all the beings this world has known, might justly have stood outside the common bondage of sin, but who honored the bond of life and suffered willingly, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God."

Is there no great hope in this fact? If the universe produce such a love, if in the bond of life one like that is bound with us, is there not great hope for you and me?

We thus approach the great remedy. The love that is offered us in this oneness of Christ with us, sealed to us by the sacrifice of Calvary, can, if we will let it, change the past by the change it works in us and in others. It is the distilled effects of the past as contained in our present character, and in the characters of others, that need above all things to be dealt with. If the external events are worth reconstructing, we can rest content that God will do it. Suppose, however, by way of example, that we can achieve with those others of our past whom we have loved or injured a new common character that shall fit us for a new and eternal fellowship, will not the new events of that new fellowship be far more fascinating and attractive to us than any return to a past day of tender grace? After all, it is the soul that matters, and if in any degree the mischievous influences of the past as they deposited themselves in your character have found transmutation and have been made to minister to purer ideals of thought and life, you have already known the atoning grace of God. Divine forgiveness is a fact registered in your own being. Will anyone deny that from the love that Jesus demon-

strated at Calvary there does pour down upon the soul who will contemplate it a mightier grace and inspiration than can be discovered elsewhere?

There can be few souls in these days, when the story of Jesus is so well known, that fail, when convicted of sin, to turn to the Crucified with some wistful desire to understand his meaning and to grasp his aid. And is it not everything for all to feel that God respects the "at-one-ness" between himself and us, that he maintains it, keeps it going, preserves this bond of life as a path by which his mercy can forgive our sin, as a way by which his life may flow into us and do battle in our souls with evil?

Look where we will, there seems to be no other remedy for the past but this. If this is not true, we must agree that we are the puppets of fate, and that the hope that springs eternal in the human breast is a lie.

It is between these alternatives that we have to choose. Why should we choose the one that depresses, disheartens, and crushes our spirit, which hands us over, body and soul, as veriest slaves to soulless forces? Why should we not choose the alternative that yields such verification of its own truth in that it honors the hope that springs eternal in the human breast, and releases all the energies of good that lie dormant in the soul? Is there not a sweet reasonableness in the appeal that Browning made:

> What think ye of Christ, friend, when all is done and said?
> Like you this Christianity or not?
> It may be false, but will you wish it true?
> Has it your vote to be so, if it can?

CHAPTER III

THE DEEPER CLEANSING OF THE SOUL

One of the greatest of the many great prayers to be found in the Psalms is that poignant and profound cry of Psalm 19: 12: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

It is an utterance that stamps the writer as one who is assured that only inward righteousness can satisfy God. He knew himself so well that he had a shrewd suspicion that there was much he did not know. So eager is he to be blameless in the sight of God as well as in the eyes of his fellows, that he is prepared to give himself up to the one who knows. Everything for a cleansing of the soul, deeper than anything he himself can achieve. Doubtless, had we known the writer, we should have discovered a humble-minded person, always ready to shoulder the blame of any given situation and to play the scapegoat for his fellows, a man possessed of a wholesome fear of indulging a too-good opinion of himself. His humility must have had a rich reward in history, for his prayer must have been a very fruitful source of judgment for other souls. How many times this little sentence must have leaped startingly out of the sacred page and lodged in some reader's soul with irritating but redeeming effect! As the grit in the oyster shell provokes the lovely deposit of the pearl, so this disturbing possibility of secret faults must have been in many a life the key to real thorough-going character at last.

The Difficulty of Self-Judgment

The prayer calls to mind immediately the inherent

difficulty of self-judgment. It is necessary only to cast one's mind round one's own acquaintances and to ask of them whether they really know themselves in order to be convinced of this difficulty. How many we know who are afflicted with a blind spot concerning their own particular follies! Most of us carry ourselves with sufficient self-confidence among our friends and perhaps with still more self-confidence among strangers, but all of us know folk who are betwixt and between these groups with whom we seem to fail; people who do not respond to our charm; they are, we say, "difficult to get on with." It is not on record what they say about us. There must be a few lives that are lacking in these areas of adverse judgment. We are apt to say very easily that these people do not know us or will not appreciate us, yet there is just the faint possibility that we ourselves possess a blind spot in regard to ourselves; that there is some point or angle at which we lost sight of ourselves. It is just possible that while these people do not know everything about us, they know just that thing which is at fault and to which our friends are generously indulgent. Would it not be safer, therefore, to assume that there are faults in ourselves secret from ourselves? We should err at least upon the safe side.

Searching Oneself

Now to be forewarned like this is, to an extent, to be forearmed. If it is practically certain that all of us are faulty in certain particulars that we ourselves fail to register, it behoves us indeed to be on our guard. Nothing is so sad as to find quite good people spoiled by this or that failing. It is so often "the

little foxes that spoil the vines." Do you dislike a certain person very much and put it down to this or that fault in him? Be careful! The chances are that you are looking into a mirror even while you are busily protesting to yourself that you would not be such a person as he for the world.

Laura Richards, in one of her parables, tells the story of a man who was walking down a certain High Street in company with a friend. He began commenting very adversely upon a person who was moving rapidly toward them, but he stopped abruptly when he discovered that he was walking in direct line with a large mirror jutting out from a jeweller's shop.

In self-knowledge, even of this very negative kind, there is already an element of redemption. To be driven to the convinced utterance of such a prayer as this is the beginning of a deeper cleansing of the soul. It will mean the beginning of a new habit of more strict self-examination; it does at least deliver us from the peril of utterly losing concern for our moral integrity. It will prevent us from doing what even so many Christian people are doing to-day—taking our moral health for granted.

One of the most beautiful and touching features of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* is the character of a Buddhist priest who upon one occasion is ill-treated and robbed in the mountains. Readers will remember that the priest's great concern was not to discover and punish the thieves, although he was urged to do so, but, by earnest prayer and self-denial, to discover *what was wrong in his own spiritual condition* that he should attract such a calamity as that. While such an attitude, if unduly exaggerated, might become morbid, yet one

cannot escape the beautiful spirit of humility which it contains or the essentially Christian character of the desire to bear upon one's soul the sins of others.

No Soul Can Save Itself

Yet in this alone there is no salvation. It merely puts us in the way for cleansing, but little more. For, after all, egoism is a position we cannot entirely escape of ourselves. It is, as it were, a spot to which we are riveted. It is a bias that works too subtly for our detection. For this reason it ought to be perfectly plain that there is no self-salvation possible to any soul. We are, therefore, compelled to some further steps if we would really find adequate cleansing. We need absolutely others, and *the* Other. If we are in earnest, therefore, we shall allow ourselves to become sensitive and humble before the opinion and feeling of others; we shall realize that, after all, others can see us just where we cannot see ourselves. When Robert Burns uttered his prayer,

> O wad some power the giftie gie us
> To see oursels as ithers see us,

it would seem that he must have forgotten one of the essential values of Christian fellowship. It should be one of the prime functions of Church fellowship to encourage mutual judgments of character, governed by the scrupulous honesty and the perfect love and good will that are in the spirit of the Saviour. One of the most beautiful things in the New Testament for the present writer is the way in which a bond of friendship is made out of the very failings of Christian people. "Confess your faults to one another," says the

apostle. As though he would say: "Make the very things that might hinder and spoil your fellowship a deeper bond of interest in a mutual quest for more perfect character." An inevitable sequel to such a policy would be the discovery of one's own secret faults through the discriminating and kindly candor of men and women whose love is pledged to one in Christ.

"The Power Not Ourselves"

But even yet we have not found the radical remedy, for it is one thing to know the fault is there, to track it to its secret haunt; it is another thing to find the power that can cast it out. A farmer was once showing a boy how to plow a furrow. "O, that's easy," cried the boy carelessly, and at once set the plow in motion; but to his surprise it wobbled all over the field. "What were you looking at?" said the farmer, as the boy brought the plow back for a fresh start. "Well, *myself* mostly," said the boy. "You will never plow a straight furrow that way," said the farmer, "lift up your eyes and look away from yourself, look straight ahead and see how you get on." The boy tried once more, but again with absolute failure. Wobble, wobble, wobble went the plow. And again the farmer said: "Did you do what I told you; where were you looking at that time?" "Well, you told me to look straight in front of me," said the boy rather sullenly, "so I looked at the old cow in front over there."

The farmer laughed. "Of course the plow wobbled as the cow moved," said he, "you must have a fixed object to look at; now fix your eyes on that tree standing up in the hedge straight ahead, and don't take your

eyes off it." And that time the furrow was plowed straight.

The story is a good parable. There is no actual deliverance in mere self-vision; indeed, it may simply cause us to be haunted and worried by our possible defects. Nor can we surrender our conduct greatly to the example of others, they may wobble as much as we. It is unto the real Master of life that we must lift our eyes, that perfect standard of character and life that God has lifted up in the midst of our humanity. Submit yourselves in daily discipline to the quiet, kindly, but thorough, searching of his Spirit! Lay your life, your temper, your motives, your desires, every secret place of your soul open to him, and steadily his sweet light will give to your soul and work that deeper cleansing which shall bring to perfect evidence in you at last the eternal image of God.

CHAPTER IV

THE MINISTRY OF MYSTERY

A VERY real peril in the realm of the spirit is the misunderstanding of mystery. It is a peril that confronts us from two directions. It arises in the first place from the undue emphasis that the uneducated, or ill educated, place upon practical considerations to the exclusion of the poetic and the imaginative. This attitude gives rise to a real fear of the mysterious and an active dislike of anything that is not readily understood. The same attitude arises in the second place, also, from the tendency of the educated mind to rationalize everything and to discard, as either unimportant or irrelevant, all that cannot be so rationalized. A good type of the latter is the heavily legal mind, which must have everything cut and dried to logical pattern and is utterly lost on the boundary between ascertained fact and the unknown with all its possibilites of new knowledge. Now in both these instances the human mind is faced with the serious risk of coming to a standstill—of making a mere game of life, to be played perpetually with counters that are familiar, and of becoming so used to that game as to be definitely unfitted for any wider activity.

The mind has been well called "the Prince of Shirks;" and such types as have been referred to grow far more lazy mentally than they imagine. They confine themselves only to the familiar and become quite skilled in its manipulation; but mental enterprise is banned. A terrible intellectual arrogance often afflicts such folk;

they begin to think that they know everything, whereas, of course, the true hall mark of the man of real knowledge is the discernment, to use Newton's famous phrase, that he is "but a child picking up pebbles on the beach." Closely akin to this condition is that pseudo-scientific spirit which imagines that in physical analysis it comes to the end of knowledge. The old scientific materialism which is now so rapidly passing, reduced life to a chronic dullness. Wood was only wood, iron was only iron, a thing was only just itself, it contained no precious secret, no aura of romance, no bright possibilities of surprise, no mystery. Water was only H_2O. Water! With deserts and oceans and Niagaras and tears in the world! Balzac, in his *Quest for the Absolute* has described this type for us with exactitude. He tells us of a chemist who was annoyed by his wife's tears and who, with the arrogance of his little knowledge, cried: "Tears! Tears! I have decomposed them! a little phosphate of lime, a little chloride of sodium, a little mucous and a little water—poof!"

One Mystery at Least

But it is not so easy to escape the wonder of life and the awesome mystery that fills creation, for however we may shut ourselves up in little snuggeries of the familiar and the trivial, we ourselves are steadily traveling on, and ever there sounds more loudly in our ears the boom of the surf upon the harbor bar, and we know that the time of the great sailing that we call "death" approaches inevitably for us. None can escape that mystery!

But if we would consider more carefully, we should find mystery much closer to us even than that, for

everything in our human experience has its own mystery, its own peculiar secret. Tennyson has enshrined this fact in memorable words:

> Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower—but *if* I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.

Yes, indeed, but the poet cannot do it, either with the flower or anything else. When he thinks, as so many have thought, that he has reached the end of the mystery in anything, suddenly it breaks into fresh depths of profundity. Scientists till recently thought that they had found in the atom the material ultimate, matter reduced to its simplest term.

But, as knowledge was steadily pursued, the solid atom resolved itself into a system of forces, and the scientist was plunged again into illimitable space. If the human mind will only keep on thinking in any one direction long enough, it steadily thinks itself nearer and nearer to a Presence that is wrapped in profound mystery and that fills the mind with indescribable awe. In any and every investigation that man undertakes, he comes face to face, not with solution and the end of mystery, but with the INFINITE GOD, UNFATHOMABLE in his mystery.

A GRACIOUS MINISTRY

We begin, then, to glimpse the truth that this deep mystery in things is purposed, in the first place, *for the sake of reverence and love*. It is part of the very nature of things, simply because all things are

rooted and grounded in God, who himself is Infinite. But it is not meant to tantalize man or to crush him with disappointment. On the contrary, it is the very glory of God in his relationship to man that there ever remains something fresh to be revealed from him to his child.

It is due to the very greatness of the holy fellowship into which we are called.

There is a mountain in Australia called Mount Disappointment. It marks a summit up which two brave pioneers once climbed, hoping to see the ocean and to find that they had crossed the continent. From its height they could see nothing but leagues on leagues of continent still before them. The mighty magnitude of the land they were exploring was the cause of their disappointment. Their sense of poverty sprang from an embarrassment of riches.

So is it as we explore life. We are faced by a mystery which is simply the challenge of a mighty adventure greater than we had dreamed.

What would it mean for us to lose the sense of mystery in the being of God? Can anyone contemplate with equanimity coming to the end of God? The irreparable loss we should sustain can be illustrated from our human relationships. Behind the well-known phrase, "Familiarity breeds contempt," there lies the all-too-frequent fact that people permit themselves to be so shallow in their characters that others come to the end of them and get the impression that there is nothing more to know. In such cases, relationship is stultified, reverence dies, interest becomes perfunctory, formal, and meaningless, and friendship decays. Yet the individual never ceases for a moment

to be interesting to himself, not even in experiences of self-loathing and disgust, for the self that can loathe itself is most highly interesting. It is only because people will live so superficially and exhibit only the shallows of their thought and feeling to their fellows that they cease to be interesting. We all know the delight with which we discover people who possess what we call "depth," who call to our powers of thought and understanding, and challenge our knowledge of human nature, who "take knowing," as we say, and carry with them the lure of more mysterious personality. Such, however, should we be ourselves, if our lives were really rooted and grounded in God. Our personalities then would be throbbing with life, ever breaking into fresh development, and, therefore, into fresh surprise for our friends. For, with God, it is eternally so. He carries forever in himself the lure of surprise, the charm of new possibility, the fascination of One concerning whom there is always something fresh and more beautiful to learn. As Chesterton has said so penetratingly: "We have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we."

The Handmaid of Truth

We must notice, however, in the second place, that mystery exists for *the very achievement of knowledge*. Without the lure of mystery man would have learned nothing. Truth has come to him as a coy maiden giving hints and glimpses of fleeting loveliness which have led him on to earnest pursuit and often to arduous conquest. In the very nature of things, God could not impart knowledge to man without the act of thinking on

man's part. Knowledge cannot be dumped upon the human mind like bricks upon the road.

Man has to be stimulated to the act of thought by the appeal that mystery makes to his curiosity. As a well-known divine recently declared: "It must be one of God's greatest tasks to keep men thinking."

Yet we are familiar with the fact that the existence of mystery is often made a reason for discarding thought. There is no more dangerous tendency in religion than this which bids the human intellect to surrender its endeavor to understand the things of God and exert a blind and unintelligent faith. Sometimes, indeed, the intellect grows weary of the struggle for knowledge and for understanding, but even so, to exclude the noblest power of man from the noblest realm that exists for its exercise is the deepest wrong to the human spirit. If we are indeed made in the image of the Eternal, our minds cannot long be satisfied with the husks of superstition and barren dogma. They will assuredly crave the bread of heaven, the living thought of the Divine Mind. No condition could be more artificial than this denial of intellect in the name of religion, for let such religion begin to approximate to real communion with God and just as certainly will the intellect take fire once more. It is here that we see the full force of the fact noted before, that in everything there is mystery, for if the soul that has grown tired in reaching up to the highest heights of thought with God will yet really think as it turns to the trivial things of life, then lo! it stands again in the Presence from which it fled. No, the wiser course in such a state of mental weariness is not to deny the "glory of the lighted mind," but to retreat upon the great

truth that the human soul possesses a *personal* Divine Guide into all the truth, and so refresh the spirit in emotional relationship to that personal Friend that one's strength for the high companionship of the divine thought is renewed.

The mystery exists then, not that we should cease to learn, but to insure that we shall be ever learning. It is there, not that we should never arrive but should be ever arriving and yet still not lack a farther journey. The mystery exists for knowledge, and it is in everything! It is the lure of God's own being brooding over all our lesser life, ever receding before us, ever beckoning us to the conquest of new heights. In the inspiration of that Presence we cannot long remain mentally tired, nor will the mystery any more affright us. We shall yield ourselves to its ministry of allurement and challenge and pursue unfalteringly the truth that is forever becoming ours, yet without end.

CHAPTER V

THE CROWNING QUALITY

THE greatest and most enviable form of power in human experience is staying power. We have all enjoyed watching a hundred-yard sprint race. It is thrilling to see the candidates exerting every ounce of energy every step of the way from the starting point to the goal. But it is very much more thrilling to watch the three-mile race, to mark how the runners seek just the stride that can keep the course to the end, to see how gradually but how surely the length of the race arranges the runners in their due order of strength; and then to see finally how it insists upon the discovery of the man who has just the little bit of strength still held in hand with which to finish the course at top speed. There must have been something of the exultant spirit of such a runner in St. Paul, when he declared so triumphantly: "I have kept the course." Certainly it was the necessity of discovering in his disciples this staying power that led Jesus to warn them that "they that endure to the end shall be saved."

LIFE'S INCREASING TEST

Life seems peculiarly designed for the discovery in us of such staying power, for most lives grow harder and harder as the years multiply. There is a sense in which the experience of Jesus is the epitome of that of all mankind. The tragic last phase, with its unspeakable agony in the garden and upon the cross, was but the final unfolding of the meaning of the first temp-

tations and of the repeated tests of his loyalty to God and man which studded the path of his life. And perhaps of all the wonderful things he ever said, none was more welcome to himself than his cry of victory from the cross: "It is finished." Most lives tend toward the same type of experience. Perhaps there are exceptions—lives that begin in storm and stress and seem to ride for the rest of their days in a calm and pleasant roadstead. Yet even of these one suspects that in their success and in their serenity there may be a more subtle test of their spiritual condition than they suspect, and one that is the harder, therefore, to meet and satisfy. But for the most of us the fight gets harder; life becomes more complicated, not less, as the number and responsibility of its relationships increase. As the powers of the body move forward to maturity, revealing the full strength of animal passion that is in the best of us, and as they just as steadily begin to wane, bringing the further complication of failing health, life often becomes a pitiful struggle. The writer confesses to a profound admiration for the heroism of the majority of those men and women who stand upon the western slope of the hill of life and upon whom "the ills to which our flesh is heir" and the disappointments and disillusions of this present world gather with increasing weight. This is the real testing time of life, and at no other time in life perhaps is moral collapse so prevalent and yet so deserving of pity. Certainly youth does need to be seriously warned that the "primrose path of dalliance" will not avail him forever; that if he is getting into the habit of putting off difficult things to a more convenient season he had better realize that such seasons in all probability do not lie ahead

of him. The test of life undoubtedly tends to increase in its later stages.

Continuity Essential

We come face to face, therefore, with the necessity of continuity if the soul is to be saved. The standing of the last test, of the worst and the fiercest test, is essential. It is not enough to be a matriculation success for the University of Heaven; one must be a graduate. Our salvation demands our keeping on. This, of course, is true of all kinds of salvation. Not upon good beginnings nor even upon steady continuings, but only upon solid endings can God place the seal of success. Think, for example, of the safety of a great bridge spanning a mighty river. Not upon the pleasant ease with which the piles sank, at first, into the mud at the river's bottom does its safety depend, but only upon the way in which they were driven home into the solid earth. The signal of safety is the last stroke, not the first nor any in between. Here is a nail upon which hangs an invaluable picture! The first strokes of the hammer upon that nail, even the one that missed it and struck your thumb, were important, and all the blows are necessary to drive the nail in, but without the final stroke which sent it right home, there could be no safety. What avails it that you turned to God in your youth and held on to him through years of severe struggle if now you are going to give way? It is not what you *were*, but what you *are* that makes you safe. Well begun may be half done, but of what use is a half-done Christian? Could there be any greater condemnation, any more shameful condition for a soul that has once seen the vision,

once felt the fire of God within him, than to qualify for that caustic description of Scripture: "Ephraim is a cake half turned." This is a warning that our age needs peculiarly. We live in such a hurry that we worship swiftness rather than strength. As a writer has said:

> The fault of the age is a mad endeavor
> To leap to heights that were made to climb,
> By a burst of strength, by a trick most clever
> We plan to forestall and outstrip time.
>
> Yet to covet the prize and shrink from the winning,
> To thirst for glory yet fear to fight,
> What can it lead to at last but sinning,
> To mental languor and moral blight?

What can God himself do for the soul that wants only the end, but not the endurance; that craves the goal, yet will not tread the road; that asks for the laurel wreath of victory, yet will not with patience run the race? As Ibsen says, through his great character, Brand, concerning the peasant and his son who would not face the storm with him:

> Were it but the power you lack
> I would have borne you on my back.
> My weary back, my feet that bleed,
> Had gladly answered to your need;
> But help is useless to a man
> Who does not *will*, save where he can.

The Way of Victory

Yet, providing we are willing to endure, however much we doubt our strength, there are considerations of great inspiration that can be brought to our aid. In the first place, the increasing test of life is not wanton,

it has its purpose. The realization of this flings a kindlier aspect over the whole situation and makes it glow with promise. It is everything to feel that the test is not opposition but opportunity. It is there not because God is against us, but because he is for us. Readers of Hugh Walpole's great novel, *Fortitude*, will remember the motto that its hero Peter learned to cherish early in life, "It is not life that matters, but the courage you bring to it," and they will recall how at one point in his troubled career the true interpretation of all his tribulation was brought home to his soul. "You are worth it, you are too valuable to be left in peace," was the message that came to him. There was that in his personality which was too precious to God and man to be allowed to lie fallow in ease and comfort. It could be brought to expression only in tribulation.

But a further consideration of overwhelming importance is that the power which can come only by the practice of endurance is *the very substance of salvation.* "In your patience," said Jesus, "ye shall win your soul." Every moment that you hold out fulfills a work of grace in your character. It builds into your being the very strength of God. Here is the very soul of life's meaning, to receive for one's own possession the character that is divine. As a great poet has so beautifully declared:

> Endurance is the crowning quality
> And patience all the passion of great hearts:
> These are their stay, and when the leaden world
> Sets its hard face against their fateful thought,
> And brute strength, like a scornful conqueror,
> Clangs his huge mace down in the other scale;
> The inspired soul but flings his patience in,
> And slowly that outweighs the ponderous globe,

> One faith against a whole earth's unbelief,
> One soul against "the flesh of all mankind."

For our final consideration, and, please God, our ultimate triumph, let us realize that to the character so won from the struggle of life God *can restore every good thing*. Whatever of real good you may have sacrificed by the way for the sake of the higher loyalty can never be lost to you; for, possessing God, you reënter into the possession of all things. "Then answered Peter, and said unto him: 'Lo, we have left all and followed thee, what then shall we have?' And Jesus siad: 'Every one that hath left houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life.'" Remember that God is on your side in all that he may call upon you to endure. He will not permit you to be tried above what you are able to bear. Believe in his strength welling up within your soul and endure to the end.

CHAPTER VI

DISAPPOINTMENT

THE story of Moses is more adventurous than many a novel, and, like most stories of real life, full of intense drama. Born at the height of Egypt's fame, of an enslaved yet proud people, rescued from an untimely death by Pharaoh's own daughter, Thermuthis, adopted by her, and made a possible heir to the imperial throne, what other human stories shows so dramatic a change of fortune? Yet this brilliant career the hero sacrifices entirely in a holy rage against the oppressing race, enduring with exquisite patience an exile of forty years, and then with sublime courage returning to the court to champion his own people. These at last he leads forth to freedom, a rabble of demoralized slaves. After long wandering in the wilderness he leads them to the border of their promised land, no longer a horde of slaves, but a disciplined and ordered nation, with a strict code of laws, a religion, and a national consciousness. This moral code and this religion, in large measure the result of his inspired genius, were destined to become in their purest elements world-wide in practice and influence. Is there any romance more romantic, any story more thrilling and inspiring?

If any man, we feel, deserved well of God, it was Moses, this hero of such long and faithful struggle and of such inestimable blessing to mankind. Yet at the end of his unparalleled achievement he is met with what appears to be a cruel and crushing disappoint-

ment. The land he had ever in view, the better country, the vision of which had been his great source of strength, giving him such extraordinary patience and firmness with his people, this at the last, is denied him. "I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither."

It is an old and familiar story; yet the tragedy of it still has power to wring our hearts, and doubtless none who know it fail at least once in their experience of life to recall it and muse upon it as the type of a very common fate.

Very many hearts drain this experience to the dregs. What can be said for their help? We must acknowledge to begin with

The Pain of Disappointment.

The supreme element of pain in all disappointment is found in *the overthrow of expectation*. "I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes." We have seen it with our eyes. What a capacity we all have for making things our own before we actually obtain them! We plan our to-morrow and fill it with the all-desired thing, our eyes feast mentally upon it, our hearts entwine themselves about it. Thus we make it ours by all the subtle preappropriation of our soul. Our whole being yearns toward it, and that whole-hearted expectation, that faith which is so essentially "the substance of things hoped for," seems to establish in us a sacred right to the precious thing. It becomes our *promised land*. All our inward being thrilled to the promise of it. We were permitted to see it—therein lies the peculiar pain, the cruelty of disappointment. Tennyson says that

> It is better to have loved and lost
> Than never to have loved at all,

but few souls can appreciate his point, and could we resign ourselves to the *permanent* loss of what we love, it would only bespeak the utter poverty of our affection.

We see this pain, one of the great recurring pains of life, most clearly demonstrated in the disappointments of childhood. The child has not that control of its feelings which can hide so poignant a shock, and if you would see what many an adult heart suffers in *secret*, see the child under an agony of disappointment. "I had looked forward to it so!" How quickly the hot tears come! How flushed is the little face with feeling! How hot with rebellion the little soul! How choked the spirit! That awful lump in the throat! Who has not known it? Aye, and known it not with the swift yet feeble passion of a child, nor with the passing emotion of youth, but with deep-toned, tearing, yet stifled agony of full manhood or womanhood?

How often the soul that suffers thus, rises in quick revolt at the crushing tyranny of circumstance, then sinks spiritless and beaten into a spiritual decline, a kind of consumption of the soul! In that poignant human document, *The Journal of a Disappointed Man*, Mr. W. H. P. Barbellion has shown us his own soul writhing in just such an agony as this. And it is woefully common. Shall I be judged a gloomy prophet if I say that nearly every life, perhaps every life, sooner or later, bites the dust of disappointment? Certainly life has a terrible way of collapsing on the verge of victory. The story of Moses is a perfect parable in general of human experience. A passionately desired ambition, a long, honorable struggle, mostly a fine record, with

perhaps a blemish here and there, and then just when the soul is prepared to shout "victory," and claim its rest and renown, there comes blow after blow, sorrow upon sorrow as though some heartless giant were lopping the boughs off our tree of life, to leave it as stark and bare as when it began!

I repeat that it is a common experience in one form or another. A man's sorrows tend to crowd thickest upon him on the border of his promised land. "Every heart knoweth its own bitterness."

Yet there are certain great facts which may transform this whole matter for us if we will consider them.

Disappointment—Our Appointment

We can never entirely dissociate the things that happen to us from our own character. Our own inner nature plays in the subtlest way upon the whole structure of our outward affairs and especially on the minds of others. It often happens, for example, in human relations that an evil mood, deeply hidden in the soul, scarcely suggested even in word or action, nevertheless conveys its tinge to other minds and arouses inexplicable prejudices which block the way to one's coveted ambition.

Our sins defeat us more often and more subtly than we think. Our intrinsic worth dictates more frequently than we will admit success or failure. The story of Moses illustrates this well.

It is no exaggeration of a momentary lapse of temper that keeps Moses from the promised land. The reference in Numbers to his prideful utterance, when he struck the rock to provide water for his people appeals to our modern mind as ascribing a rather harsh sub-

christian character to God. This fact should lead us to interpret it in another way. It is not so much the Lord who prevents Moses entering the land he covets. It is Moses's own sensitive conscience owning up to all the secret unworthiness which flashed for one moment into evidence on that particular occasion. The story reflects Moses's feeling of God's judgment in his secret soul. Similarly, many a hand outstretched to grasp its destiny grows hesitant, nerveless, sometimes palsied by the conviction of sin, and dooms itself to failure.

Yet this is not the chief sense in which disappointment is our appointment. The root of our own responsibility for the disappointments that come to us lies in the fact already noticed, that *we allow our hearts to be stolen from us by some special aim and ambition.* If we did not permit ourselves to "care" so much for this or that we should not find our lives so filled with "care." The fact is, we do not regulate our affections sufficiently and practice the discipline of our desires. We do not sit lightly enough to worldly ambitions, or even to the nobler aims that consume our earthly existence. Jesus makes this fact prominent in his teaching on the Mount. "Where your heart is," he says, "there will your treasure be also." "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you."

Strictly speaking, therefore, we make our own disappointments. This is further proved by the way in which we constantly unmake them. It is no uncommon thing for us to deliberately crush our preference for something that has been finally denied us. We cease to "care," that we may rid ourselves of "care."

"Time is a great healer," we say, deceiving ourselves. It is not time that heals our wound. It is all

too often the fickleness of our human caring. Finding something inaccessible we gradually overcome the disappointment by a simple transference of affection. In such a triumph there is very little real self-conquest. Yet as a method, when rightly applied, it points the way that leads to triumph. Our heart should truly be so "hid with Christ in God" as to be beyond the sting of disappointment. We should "set our affections on the things that are above," that we may suffer the loss of earthly aims without pang or regret. The secret of our susceptibility to disappointment lies exactly where Moses found it—in our egoism, our selfish self-regard. It is when we say, "I did this," "I will do that," that we put it in the power of the things of time and sense to sting us with disappointment. When the soul gives rein to pride, it is shutting itself out from its promised land.

There is an impressive story told of Spurgeon to the effect that he once had the opportunity of a college training. The whole matter, however, miscarried, and Spurgeon felt bitterly disappointed, until there came into his mind this word of God, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not!" and with these words ringing in his soul he conquered his chagrin. Let us analyze our disappointments in the light of that divine command. Are they not in many cases the result of our seeking great things *for ourselves*. Is it hard to let this or that go? It will depend upon whether our heart belongs to God or whether it is prisoner to this or that ambition.

But what about those disappointments that, so far as we can judge, arise because our purest aims

and most legitimate desires are frustrated? These summon us to a further consideration.

Disappointment—His Appointment

Yes! Always! Even where it represents our failure it also represents *His permission that we should fail.*

In the last analysis all things happen according to divine law. "Thou comest not to thy place by accident," says Milton, and he is right.

You cannot entirely dissociate the divine will from any happening whatsoever. The relation must never be viewed as fatalistic, but it must always be recognized as governmental. Nothing can happen save by God's permission, though in a free world he must often be forced to permit that which he would fain avoid. That is where our responsibility comes in. We thrust upon him the necessity for disciplinary permissions that must constantly break his heart.

But be assured he would not persevere in his respect for our freedom in these permissions of temporary evil did he not see that by them we become educated into nobler and wiser choices.

Great permanent laws of spiritual attraction and repulsion are at work on our human world. For example, many of our disappointments are caused by the failure and sin of other people. That seems to us bitter and unjust. Yet dare we ask God to revoke that close interdependence of life with life which makes our suffering possible? Did he do so, by the same stroke he would annul our dearest joys. It would render human society impossible. But if we are sure of his government, cannot we trust his permissions? Cannot we

find in his overruling providence infinite solace for our bitter pain?

> Ill that he blesses is our good,
> And unblest good is ill,
> And all is right that seems most wrong
> If it be his blest will.

Jesus here is our leader by his own experience. He, too, knew what it was to be disappointed.

"O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thee . . . and ye would not!"

"Nevertheless not my will." . . .

Yet Jesus recognized through his pain in Gethsemane that if God permitted him to suffer thus, his great end would not be defeated. If not soon, then later would the kingdom come. If not by immediate consent, then by the cross of Calvary and the travail of his Church, God's victory would yet be won. So he took the cup as from his Father's hand.

The only thing for us to do is what he did, surrender utterly to God's purpose and learn to cherish it at whatever cost to our own personal plans and hopes. "Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for him." Do you remember how that Psalm goes on? It is a remarkable promise. "Commit thy way unto him—*and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*" Is that true? Yes, thank God, here is the culmination of our story.

Disappointment—the Supreme Appointment

What happened to Moses? Was he worse off or better? He did not tread the land flowing with milk and honey, it is true. *But he trod the golden floor of heaven.* He found the city of God and reached the land of eternal light. "He was not, for God took him."

"God buried him," we are told. Don't let us think of God as gravedigger. He digs no graves. God buried him in that embrace of the everlasting arms which is the saints' supreme reward, God buried him in that endless life, the rapturous thrills of which infinitely transcend the fiercest joys of earth. Moses found a *greater* land of promise.

I turn to my New Testament, and what do I read? "And there appeared unto him, Moses and Elijah, and they talked with him." Moses was buried in life, not in death. O disappointed soul! Will such a thing be written of you one day? Will you keep that supreme appointment with him who is true Lord of your life, and whom to know is perfect life?

It can be so, if you take your disappointment aright. God never disappoints in any final sense. Great is he at compensation. If he permits it at all it is only that by it we may grow worthy of our supreme place in his presence. If he checks our destiny, it is only to straighten it out that we may come at last to our own place.

Compensation is certain in God's world. The day makes up for the night, the summer for the winter. If the sun sets here, it is but to rise yonder. Every movement in the universe is balanced by another. Equilibrium must be maintained. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" So, even while you gaze with tearful eyes upon your unattainable land of promise, God is hastening you on to the land that is fairer than day. Believe in him. Trust him. Follow his way.

Emerson has a stanza which eloquently asserts the ultimate perfect justice of God's dealings with us all. Let us cherish its message in all days of disappointment.

CHAPTER VII

TWO PRODIGALS AND THEIR FATHER

THE most famous and popular parable that Jesus ever uttered, the parable of the Prodigal Son, is a wonderful epitome of character. In the three persons of the parable—the prodigal, the elder brother, and the father—there are exhausted the main types of human character. Every one of us might be docketed with more or less accuracy under one or other of these types—the self-indulgent, the self-righteous, or the redemptive. The characters are worth considering from this point of view as they are presented in the parable.

I. THE PRODIGAL WHO WENT AWAY

Concerning any prodigal, it is always necessary to ask: "Why did he leave home?" In the actual instance of the parable we must assume that he left a good home. Although it may often be true that when boys and girls go wrong, home influences are to blame, it is by no means invariably so; sheer self-will can work terrible mischief in any life. Lads and girls have gone forth from the best homes to live the worst lives. It is a solemn thought that not one of us can absolutely guarantee the integrity of another's life. Always we come up against that subtle power of self-hood in every life, that royal but terrible power of choice. It is not wise to think that because you have been brought up in a good home or come of godly parents that you are immune from the solicitations of evil and the seductions of passion. There can be few more terrible experiences

in life than to pass suddenly from the sheltered protection of an innocent home into the arena of fierce moral temptation untrained for the contest. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Only by your own choice of good, sternly adhered to, can you be rendered safe.

Concerning this particular prodigal and all his type, it is possible to say two things with evident truthfulness. He was right in his quest; he was wrong in his method.

Self-Realization

He was doubtless an adventurous lad, a boy of spirit, of strong, vigorous life, one who felt the call and the fascination of the big world beyond his home. It is a good thing that all men are not stay-at-homes like the elder brother. If there had been no Columbus there might still have been no New World, no American republic of brilliant promise. Had there been no St. Paul there might have been no British Christianity; had there been no Livingstone, Africa might have been still the Dark Continent.

This lad was in quest of life; the modern term for it is self-realization. Christianity distinctly approves that quest and that purpose. Did not Jesus say, "I have come that ye may have life, and have it more abundantly?"

Every soul feels at some time or other this imperious desire to realize itself, to live its own life, to dominate its own powers, to escape the dominance of others, however good they may be; to be just itself, to see the world, to drink deeply of the cup of experience, to say the thing that it is in one's soul to say, to explore

all the vivid possibilities of one's being. The Hebrew soothsayer knew this craving when he cried to youth, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes;" but he also knew the great peril that attaches to a wrong method in such self-realization, for he went on to say: "But know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Which Self?

Upon this mighty impulse implanted by God within the soul, which is indeed the very urge of his own being beneath and behind our own, there has too often been erected a false philosophy of life, inherited from the pagan world and increasingly prominent in these modern days. It tells us that life is given us simply for the attaining of all possible experiences, that it has no other purpose or meaning but to be an endless succession of feeling states. One takes one's inheritance and just spends it; how, does not really matter so long as it is with the utmost indulgence. The mistake made by that philosophy, which no one has expounded with greater subtlety than Oscar Wilde, is the mistake made by this foolish boy. It means the choice of the wrong self for realization, the self of the body, not of the soul; the self of lust and not of love; the self of an animal past, not the self of a divine future. For it is the supreme characteristic of the human soul that it is not one harmonized self; it is much more like a chrysalis from which some beautiful winged creature is seeking to emerge; one can live for the chrysalis or for the winged creature. Every soul is

an arena of battle between a lower self and a higher, between the old man and the new, between the self of a dying world and the self of an eternal world. We are all conscious of that self within us which finds a fierce delight in pride, passion, and pleasure, a self which rides roughshod in its imperious demand for indulgence over the feelings and happiness of others, over the debt to the old people and the old home, over the whisperings of conscience, over the still small voice of a deeper and nobler self. This self of history, as we might call it, has been already realized; it is the animal self which has already had a long, long inning. There is a self of destiny, to which is offered the endless heritage of the Creator, calling just as imperiously for realization in every soul. What psychologists call to-day the "libido" of the other self must be transferred and consecrated to the demands of this new and higher self. This effective consecration, this passing over of energy from the one principle and purpose to the other, is the main business of every life.

The lesson of Christ's parable for self-realization is, therefore, a very solemn one. It teaches us what experience amply verifies, that self-realization by the indulgence of the lower self leads only to the deprivation of life; it leads, to quote one writer, "to a self in rags and tatters, starved and degraded, glad to eat the husks that the swine do leave, pitied at last by no man, hated and feared by all, loathed by oneself."

It is not "seeing life" as it is so often called, it is seeing death. Beneath the mask of pleasure is revealed but a grizzly skeleton. Beyond its all-too-transient reward lies that corruption which is the inevitable harvest of those that sow to the flesh. It is the height of

wisdom in youth to hate this way of life for the way of death that it really is. Never, perhaps, did the young people of the world need this warning more than in these days, when the material element of life has developed to such a fascinating variety and is replete with sensational pleasure. It is simply not true that the way to the higher life necessarily lies through the morass of sin and shame; it is possible to seek and to find the unsullied life and yet to miss nothing of the real glory of existence.

II. The Prodigal Who Stayed at Home

In the elder brother we have a very different character; doubtless a man of perfect respectability. No foulnesses clung to his reputation, it was without reproach. His duty to his father and to his home had always been well done, he had never given his parents a moment's anxiety; he was as regular in his life as a machine.

Perhaps it is as well at this point to say a word for the good lads. It is no mean thing to discharge one's debt adequately to those who have cared for one through the helpless and ignorant years; the world would be indescribably poor if it were not for the faithful sons and loyal daughters who have often shut themselves up to a life of circumscribed experience and of repressed desire in brave self-sacrifice for those they love. These shall not lose their reward.

And yet the elder brother was a prodigal, too, of another and subtler kind. There was a certain polished hardness about his character, an alienated sympathy. Doubtless Tennyson's description might apply: "Icily regular, splendidly null." In all proba-

bility he was so satisfied with himself that anybody else's admiration would have been quite wasted upon him. In him the quest of self-realization was largely dormant, because the self in possession was perfectly satisfied. The notion of moral improvement, of a greater self to be desired, had atrophied.

The return of the younger brother brings to sudden expression this subtler form of self-indulgence—namely, self-satisfaction and pride. He burns with a sense of injustice. This man who had never spared an hour's pity for the prodigal lad battling with the world; who had never felt it worth while to journey into the far country to bring him home again! Sympathy for this elder brother is entirely misplaced. He had chosen the sheltered life; in that he showed a degree of wisdom. It is by no means clear, however, that he would have behaved any better in the world, had he braved the world, than the younger son had done. Here we have the egotist living as purely for self as his younger brother, but filled with self-righteous anger because he is blind to the awful risks his brother had run. "It is meet that we should make merry and be glad," said the father with his keen preception, "for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found."

The elder brother had no thought for the younger man's suffering in the far country, and he had no preception at all of the anguish of punishment that the younger son had already experienced in the loss of his self-respect. There is, however, a greater fact still about this elder brother. He, too, was a prodigal from his father and from his home. One might measure the distance from that home to the far country, but who can measure the gulf between forgiveness and

unforgiveness, between generous, redemptive love and mean self-righteous hate and anger, between sublime unselfishness and colossal self-centeredness? This man had lived with his father, eaten at his board for years, enjoyed his company, yet, though bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, he was not yet soul of his soul! He was a wanderer in the far country of an alien character. Ian Maclaren has penned lines of eloquent appeal to this elder brother that illustrate very vividly the blindness and the instinctiveness that fall upon the self-righteous.

He writes thus:

"No doubt it is a little hard that he should have a feast when there has been none for you. Have you any friends whom you could ask to a feast? Come, be sensible. Would you have wished that feast on the same terms? To play the fool, to degrade yourself in the far country and come back in rags is a heavy price to pay for a feast. Has he a new robe? Do not forget the filthy garments they have taken out to burn lest they should defile the house. The fatted calf! Well, he has been willing to east the husks of the swine. You are jealous about the ring; it is a poor solace for the language flung at his head as a swineherd. Amid the dancing and the singing your brother is thinking of the filthy beasts among which he used to lie."

One is left wondering whether the young prodigal found it possible to stay at home in the company of the elder brother. Certainly, if one looks at life to-day, one discovers no greater obstacle to that return home for which hosts of prodigal hearts are yearning, than the appalling self-righteousness and the cruel condemnatory attitude of those who externally seem to be at

home with God. It is not the Father these poor souls fear so much as the gauntlet of criticism that seems to be the only avenue of approach to him made by those who are determined that at least one text shall be forever true: "The way of transgressors is hard."

III. The Father

Here we have a wonderful character; one who is able simultaneously to love both these prodigals. I wonder which hurt him most, the younger hot-blood sinning from impulse, horribly cruel in his selfishness and yet suffering terribly for his sin, or the elder, cold-blood, aloof, and critical, hatefully correct. Whichever hurt him most, there was forgiveness for both—love, generous to the last degree for each of them; a welcome home to the father's heart for each and for both, and a love big enough to understand them both, to pity them both, and to reconcile them to one another.

It is a solemn and beautiful vision, this love so passionately redemptive. Jesus has summed up in this character his thought of God. People have complained that there is no reference to the atonement in this parable. How can they be so blind to the meaning of this love? *Here is a love which will not shrink from any sacrifice to redeem.* All too long we have seen atonement as the necessity to placate appalling wrath. It is nothing of the kind. *It is the still more awful necessity to satisfy the overwhelming, yearning love of God over every kind of sinner.*

The parable leaves us face to face with a great question. The Father's love brought one prodigal to repentance. Did it bring the other? How eloquently

and patiently he pleaded with the elder son. "All that I have is thine, and thou art ever with me."

God has no use for a righteousness that is not redemptive, that does not seek to cover the multitude of sins that burn with shame a brother's soul. No child of God whose spirit is not that of atoning sacrifice can be at home with him.

Self-indulgent, self-righteous, or redemptive—there are these three types. Two of them are outside God and out of life, racing for death. In which of them am I? In which of them are you?

> Who seeks for heaven alone, to save his soul,
> May find the path, but will not reach the goal.
> While he who loves may wander far,
> Yet God will bring him where the blessed are.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SPIRIT OF EXPIATION

THERE are few sentences in the New Testament so strange and so profound as the record preserved by St. Mark 15: 34, "Jesus began to fear," or, as a later translation has it, "Jesus began to be full of terror and distress." The record presents an ultimatum to the reader. Either it describes the defeat and collapse of Jesus, or else it introduces us to the true character of his triumph. There have not been lacking Christian teachers who have suggested that a Christ filled with fear and tasting the bitterness of real failure is more acceptable to the human soul than a Christ who retained victory in the midst of seeming defeat. But the idea commends itself much more to the sophisticated mind of the theologian than it does to the average soul faced by the practical emergencies of life. A defeated and terror-stricken Christ is scarcely inspiring enough to be the Saviour of the common man.

The assumption that in the garden of Gethsemane the courage of Jesus broke down is one that is denied by all the other facts of the case. This is the man whose fearless preaching provoked the Pharisees to fury. This is the man who was brave enough to be absolutely honest, both with the mob and with the rulers. This is the man who could sleep through a tempest on the Galilean sea, "asleep upon a pillow." This is the man who, knowing the probable result, set his face steadfastly to go toward Jerusalem. This

is the man who, when his friend Lazarus died, wept aloud, but when he himself was scourged uttered no sound. This is the man who for a year or more has steadily envisaged the very tragedy in which he is now involved, has indeed repeatedly chosen it and prophesied it. This is the man who, when at last the soldiers arrive, makes sure that they shall not arrest one of his disciples by mistake, but steps out of the shadows, saying with superb courage: "I am he."

Is it conceivable that with such preparation of soul, with such an unbroken record of courage, the fear of death is adequate to explain his condition at this point? What was it, then, that could visit fear, and such fear, terror, and distress even upon the soul of Jesus? There can be only one reply. Jesus, by his sublime sympathy, through the majesty and solemnity of his own interpretation of his cross, is launching himself here into the shame and horror that accompany the conviction of sin. And he is doing so in a degree of intensity and pain and upon a scale of sympathy that we can only dimly apprehend. He is here *seeking in spirit the souls of those arrayed against him*, surveying their sin, and himself taking the position of scapegoat on their behalf, the position of sin bearer in the spirit of expiation.

Let us try with great reverence to understand rather better his intense emotion in this experience. There are three degrees of intensity discoverable in his sufferings.

1. *The Pain of Bitter Disappointment.*—There has been in the past a fatalism in reference to the cross which has seriously marred its meaning and which we must studiously avoid. Such references in the New Testament as "the Lamb slain from before the

foundation of the world," must be viewed as referring to God's eternal readiness to face *any sacrifice* that human redemption might require. There is little doubt but that when Jesus commenced his ministry he indulged at times high hopes of success, as, for example, when he bade his disciples lift up their eyes to behold the world "white unto harvest," or as when he declared with jubilation that he had seen "Satan falling as lightning from heaven." Even his bitter weeping over the city self-doomed to destruction is testimony to his belief that it might have surrendered to his will and become by such action a New Jerusalem, capital city of a new world.

Now Jesus is face to face with the final ruin of such hopes. There is a real element of failure in his experience, but it is not his failure. The nation that he so deeply loved had failed him, rejecting its divine destiny. There was treachery in the band of his disciples, and, where there was not treachery, a serious instability, such as in the case of Peter. Doubtless Judas weighed heavily upon the mind of Jesus. But recently, in a last appeal, he had washed the feet of Judas and saved his life by hurrying him from the upper room and from the rising wrath of his fellow disciples. Doubtless the mind of Jesus is busy here with the mystery of sin in that treacherous heart. He is yearning over at least one lost soul. This element deepens into the second.

2. *The Vision of the World.*—There was always this world reference in the mind of Jesus. It is stamped all over the gospel story, and there are no illusions about the world in his mind. The biting satire of his remark to Peter, "Now sell your cloak and buy a sword," shows how clearly his mind has entered into

the course of future events. He saw his own cross as the harbinger of a mighty host of other crosses, the pain of generations filled his soul; the agony of a world that refused the divine order painted its pictures inevitably upon that supreme imagination. If he cried aloud as he wept over Jerusalem, is it surprising that his generous soul expresses itself in terror and in distress as he agonizes over a world? Thus we are led into the third and deepest element of all.

3. *The Horror of Sin.*—Think of how Jesus was surrounded by sin at this point. Judas and Peter, the multitude, the authorities, Pilate, Caiaphas, Herod, the ribald soldiery, the men of religion, the demonstrators of justice, the common people whom he loved, ignorance! What a sickening spectacle for the pure ignorant in their wickedness and wicked in their soul of the one innocent man of history!

This horror of sin is evident through all the story of Jesus. While he always stresses the good of life rather than its evil, he is nevertheless burdened by the evident bondage of humanity. Remember how his ministry started with that inspiring word from Isaiah, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," and how his ministry was continued in the spirit of Isaiah 53: "The Son of Man is come to give his life a ransom for many."

The doom of sin was much in his thoughts. His use of such symbols as "the valley of Gehenna," "the worm that dieth not," "the unquenchable fire," His constant warnings to the soul obdurate in sin, all these bespeak the reality of his compassion, the in-

tensity of his redemptive purpose. We find Jesus continually plunging down beneath all the filth of human foulness and treachery to seek and to save the soul lost beneath it all. It is the agony of that yearning, his sense of the infinite pain that sin causes, the cost of that close identification of himself with sinning humanity which explains his terror and distress in Gethsemane. This is the cup before which he shrinks. He is wrestling with the sin of the world in a spirit that seeks to bear it all away.

O love of God! O sin of men!
In this dread act your strength is tried,
And victory remains with love:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified!

In Gethsemane we find Jesus facing what he feels to be the truth about his own sacrifice. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'

We must beware of making this experience too mysterious. Do we not know something of this spirit of expiation in our own relationships? When Rudyard Kipling wrote,

If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o'mine, O mother o'mine!
I know whose love would follow me still,
Mother o'mine, O mother o'mine!

was he not presenting the spirit of expiation in true motherhood? There is that in pure love which refuses to let its beloved remain alone even in sin. There is, of course, no isolation so complete as that of sin. It severs all relationships by its fundamental disloyalty to the ideal. It betrays every life, and that fact operates irresistibly to make a kind of hiatus between the sinful

soul and all other souls whatsoever. To know oneself false is to discover an impassable gulf fixed between one's soul and others. It belongs only to one power, the greatest creative force the universe knows, to be able to fill that hiatus, to be able to bridge that gulf, to be able to make up the awful deficiency of sin—that power is love. As a recent writer has well declared: "Crowning all, this passion flower of the spirit world has come to bloom wherever love lays itself in compassion alongside wretchedness to alleviate and rescue, wherever innocence bears in agony the shame of other's guilt, where, for example, the pure mind in an evil home becomes the conscience in which the sorrow of a brother's degradation or a sister's shame comes alive." A very beautiful example is provided by George Eliot in the character of Dinah Morris in *Adam Bede*. In her yearning over poor Hetty we are told she felt the divine presence more and more, nay, as if she herself were part of it, and it was the divine pity that was beating in her heart and so willing the rescue of this helpless one. "So, Lord, I bear her in my arms and carry her before thee. I believe in thy infinite love. What is my love or my pleading? It is quenched in thine."

By this spirit which Jesus has inspired in multitudes of humble minds we can learn something of the meaning of his cross. The Christian spirit in its purity is ever passionately redemptive, eager to take upon itself the burdens of sin beneath which other souls stagger to doom. The spirit of expiation is in the toil of a David Livingstone unto death for the natives of Africa, in the martyrdom of a James Chalmers, in the sacrifice of a Katie Lee, devoting her innocence to the winning of coarse criminals to a new way of life. In our heart of

hearts we know there is no other way of dealing effectively with sin than this. And so we are prepared for the great liberating message that the cross of Jesus sends down through the ages to every soul. For if that cross means anything at all it means that God himself is of this character, that he is *on the side of every soul against its sin*, that, however much a soul may shut itself up to the isolation of its own guilt and shame, God is ever seeking to break the siege of sin about the city of Mansoul, and to fling into the beleaguered city the infinite resources of his forgiving love.

If Jesus cried out then in terror, it was in terror of the state of your soul and mine when sin reigns therein. If he groaned in distress, it was because he was summing up in his experience the agony of your heart and mine when we know ourselves for what we are; and if he feels this for you and me, our terror and our agony must pass away before the promise of the "love that wilt not let us go."

CHAPTER IX

THE RAINBOW AND THE THRONE

THE more carefully modern scholarship examines the Book of Revelation the more does it become apparent how much spiritual treasure has remained hidden under the old misinterpretation of the book. It is curious that the theory should have obtained so long that its pictures referred to events far distant from the people of that age. We have only to ask the question as to what appeal such a book bearing no relation to current events, but referring cryptically to happenings in far distant ages would have upon ourselves if issued in our day, and apparently for our benefit, to realize how beside the point much of the old interpretation has been. The Book of Revelation was written for the inspiration of the people of Christ in that day. It had a direct spiritual message for them, wrapped in symbol, not only because of the natural love of symbol in the Eastern mind, but because it was an age of persecution, and the less those who persecuted could comprehend the book, the more likely was it to reach and remain in the hands of the persecuted.

But its symbols conveyed spiritual meanings for those very days and those very people. It is quite true that there is an element of prediction in the book, but it is a prediction not of precise events but of the inevitable working out of spiritual principles. The Christian gospel can never be reconciled with a fatalistic interpretation of prophecy.

God Is Reality

With this word of warning we are in a position to appreciate its beautiful and indeed thrilling word pictures. Consider, for example, the vision of the divine majesty that is provided for us in the fourth chapter. No one can read these verses describing the throne of God and the glory that surrounds it without feeling upon his soul something of the awe that must have trembled in the heart of the seer. One cannot but marvel at the triumphant faith of this man, a weary exile in Patmos with, as it seemed, all the world of this day against him; against him in its culture, against him in its wealth, against him in its political and military forces, yet high above all this array of violent opposition he is able to see the throne of God and to feel that "his kingdom ruleth over all." God for this man is the Ultimate Power. He is the architect of reality. However Rome may bluster, however the Jews may sneer, however the Greeks may smile at the gospel, the last word is with the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. All things must conform to him at last. Only in his way of life is there human safety and permanence. St. John the Divine, in a plight that all the world would call pitiable and degrading, is serene and exultant because he is sure of the sovereignty of God.

The Lost Sense of Sovereignty

We are frequently told that our age is lacking in a sense of the sovereignty of God, that we need a breath of the old Calvinism in our modern creed. Men do not fear God any more. They are so certain of his good nature that they have lost their reverence for his

will. In this there is an undoubted truth. We live in an age of revolt, when authorities of all kinds and orders are questioned. The world is at the adolescent stage, vigorous, forceful, adventurous, but with its reverence waiting, waiting upon a new discovery of the reasonableness of the various authorities that claim its homage.

Mystery

How shall this lost sovereignty be reëstablished? Shall we follow the advice of some and emphasize afresh the arbitrary mystery of the divine nature? There is of course no doubt of such mystery, but ours is not an age to be impressed by it. Never was human curiosity roused to such a pitch and never was scientific research meeting with such abundant reward. It is not that men deny the mystery of the creation and its Creator, but that they cry in jubilation that the mystery is unfolding itself and that these secrets exist to be shared. The age of magic is gone forever. All things exist to be investigated and at length to be understood. Man no longer looks to the priest for magic nor to the temple for that which he cannot understand. If he wants magic he goes to Maskelyne and Devant, and from the temple he demands reason and not unreason. The sovereignty of God is not to be reëstablished in this way, although when regained it will contain mystery enough.

Severity

Is this sovereignty to be restored by returning to the idea of God's severity, by harking back to the fierce and fiery doctrines and vindictive theories of punishment and judgment? One has only to realize

how such theories have simply evaporated before the growing scientific spirit of our age to realize what a childish proposition this is. Men are not going to be frightened any longer by bogies. They will believe in the torments of a material hell if you can give them sufficient reasons for so believing, but not otherwise. Blank appeal to unreasoned fear, where it does not leave them cold, arouses in them a righteous anger. It is not seemly that souls should be bullied into the kingdom of a God of love, nor is it any longer conceivable that forced allegiance can have any value in God's sight. The very complete evaporation of such doctrines from our modern Churches leaves one free to indulge in a little satire at their expense, and the writer is tempted to quote the following by an anonymous satirist, which, while somewhat severe, does serve to indicate the utter inadequacy of such ideas to the task that we would achieve.

To others the doctrine of love may be dear,
I confess I confide in the doctrine of fear.
There is nothing, I think, so effective to make
One's weak fellow creatures their errors forsake,
As to tell them abruptly, with unchanging front,
"You'll be damned if you do, you'll be damned if you don't."
A new generation forthwith must arise,
With Beelzebub pictured before their young eyes,
They'll be brave, they'll be true, they'll be gentle and kind,
Because they keep Satan forever in mind.

This is not to deny, of course, that there is severity in God; but it is a severity that must be seen to stand upon good reason. It must be a severity which convicts the offender and does not merely punish him.

Holiness Is not Enough

A third suggestion for restoring the sense of divine sovereignty is that we should declare more than we do the holiness of God. This is an entirely wholesome suggestion, but we need to be careful of our method of presentation. Again, nothing arbitrary will do. Our age is an age of moral revolt; not only religion, but morality is in the melting pot, and men are increasingly inclined to ask *what moral authority does a God possess who has never been tempted?* What right, they say, has God to set conditions to our life which he himself has never been called upon to fulfill? We live in an age of democracy, and such monarchs as exist have now to be constitutional. No authority can in these days issue a law to which it does not itself submit. It is true that when some good people hear folk talk in this way they are shocked, and cry: "Blasphemy!" They think it wrong that men should dare to question the holiness of God when that holiness is presented as a nature that he cannot help possessing, for which he has never striven. But definitions are definitions, and a virtue that has never been tested is no virtue at all; a goodness which has been forever sheltered and untried is bound to be for man a questionable quantity. But we are passing out of an age of mere shibboleths, and increasingly we see that this protest is not blasphemy but common sense, and, did we only realize it, it is a great opportunity for our faith, for it is just this difficulty of the modern world that Christianity was fashioned peculiarly to answer indeed which Christianity alone is able to answer.

Wanted—A Moral God

No, if the severity of God is to be restored to the human soul, it can only be by a new vision of God, by a new understanding of what he is, by such a revelation of him as shall show him to be the soul's hero, the rightful commander of its worship, its moral leader.

To take a parallel from daily life, in every home the authority of the parent is first felt by the little child as, in a large degree, arbitrary. But as the children grow toward adolescence the situation changes profoundly. Parental authority must become clothed in the truer dignity of reason. The parents must win the growing heart of youth by an increasing companionship. The somewhat slavish obedience to one's parents must become replaced by the ardent devotion of hero worship. Now the human home, as Jesus continually suggested, is the universe in miniature. "God who aforetime spoke by his prophets, in these latter days hath spoken by his Son." He stoops to our necessity, takes upon himself our moral test, being "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," that in his moral conquest he might win that soverignty over our race in which alone our race can find salvation. God has sought and secured the sovereignty of redemption.

The Rainbow

Now it was under the inspiration of Jesus, God incarnated for moral conquest and human redemption, that this picture of the throne of God obtained its imagery. "Behold, there was a throne set in heaven and One sitting upon the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardius, and there was a

rainbow round about the throne like an emerald to look upon."

The symbolism is as simple as it is beautiful. Jasper is a symbol of purity. It was not our green jasper, but the kind of jasper referred to later in the book, clear as crystal. The presence of God is all compact with holiness, but set in that white purity as its very heart is the sardius, blood red. The heart of God is all compact with love.

And round about the throne of infinite perfection and power streams the rainbow, the ancient symbol of mercy and of promise, symbol that never again shall God destroy, that vindictiveness is gone forever, that in him there is only blessing, and good will. The symbolism is crowned by the reference to emerald, which indicated the beautiful green of nature's new beginnings, of the fertility that the rainbow promises, symbol, that is, of the new life of the redeemed.

The Sovereignty of Love

It is this vision supremely that our modern world needs. The love of God must not be presented childishly. The world is out of its childhood. Nor must his severity be presented childishly. The world is adolescent. It cannot now be won unless its *heart* is won. The love of God must be presented as something so beautiful, so majestic in its sacrifice, so passionate in its loyalty to that purity which alone is worthy of love, that men's hearts will fail them for fear, for fear that they prove unworthy of such a love. Nor need we fear the effect, in the main, of such a presentation. If it is true in itself it will prove true to human need. A child may interpret its parents' love as a warrant for license

and may rush carelessly into his mother's presence with more boisterousness than a true respect would allow. The muddy boot on the silken skirt reveals a lack in the child mind of appreciation of what is due to love. But contrast the love of a grown man for his mother! How filled it is with the restraint of reverence! How the giant strength is controlled with gentleness that the touch may be always tender! Such grown love, in which fear has ceased to be craven and has become sacred, is the very perfection of reverence.

Alpha and Omega

We have too long treated Jesus as a mere interlude of mercy between the Jehovah of Sinai, full of thunders and terrors, and the God of future judgment full of wrath. When men have looked to the past or to the future they have seen only judgment, and judgment in terms of vindictive punishment. And they have said in their hearts: "This is God. Jesus is a dream too beautiful to be true." But how different is the language of the New Testament. For the seer of Patmos it is Christ who is "the beginning and the end," "the Alpha and the Omega." It is Christ who is the fundamental and everlasting truth about God. It is in the light of the love of Jesus that all God's judgments and wrath must be interpreted. The minor note is the note of severity, the major is the ringing, clarion call of love. God's pure white throne is encircled by a rainbow, and at its heart is the blood-red symbol of redeeming love.

It is toward this perfect triumph over the human heart that the revelation of divine love in Christ is steadily proceeding. Upon the modern world will

burst a new terror of the divine law, but the terror will result, not from the horrors of any vindictive judgment, but from the simple and wonderful fact that the divine rule is the rule of the Lamb, that round about all his stern determination that his children shall be holy as he is holy, circles that quality of which our greatest poet has written:

> 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest,
> It becomes the throned monarch
> Better than his crown . . .
> Mercy is above this sceptered sway,
> It is enthroned in the heart of kings,
> It is an attribute of God himself,
> And earthly power doth then show likest God's
> When mercy seasons justice.

There is a throne, but there is a rainbow round about that throne.

CHAPTER X

THE RIDDLE OF LIFE

As was remarked in the previous chapter, we are gradually arriving at a better understanding of the remarkable and beautiful Book of Revelation. Most of the imagery of the book is found to be applicable to the current history of the time in which it was written, and when the visions are interpreted thus, in close relation to the occurrences of the times, their great spiritual value becomes more evident.

It is not difficult to discover the significance of the vision that is recounted in chapter 5, a vision central to the whole book, its very heart, so to speak. The writer beholds a sealed book in the hands of Him who sits upon the throne. It is sealed seven times over—that is, perfectly sealed. It is as completely closed as a book can be. Yet, curiously enough, the seer tells us that it is written within and on the back, a remark which serves to show us how purely symbolic is the book. It stands for something of which the seer has at least a little knowledge. The fact that no one can be found to open the sealed book is a source of great grief to him. He is driven to tears. Then comes the great relief. Some one prevails to open the book. The chapter closes in a pæan of praise to the Crucified Lamb of God who, by his sufferings, earns the right to open the great secret.

Now, what is this book, so perfectly sealed, so wondrously opened? What can it be but the Book of the Riddle of Life—the problem of human experience?

We judge a book by its contents, and after this book is opened, the contents stand revealed. Chapters 6 and 7 unfold them to our view. All the unspeakable horror of human suffering emerges from this book. With the breaking of the First Seal there issues forth the White Horse of Pestilence. The Second Seal yields to the Red Horse of War, the Third Seal the Black Horse of Famine, the Fourth Seal the Pale Horse of Death and Remorse. With the breaking of Seal Five there issues from the book the Agony of Martyrdom. The Sixth Seal gives us the terrors of Natural Cataclysm. The whole gamut of earthly human suffering is thus passed in review. But one Seal remains, the Seventh. With the breaking of this Seventh Seal the book stands fully revealed, its story perfected and interpreted. It is as though the book were written in seven chapters and the breaking of the Seventh Seal is the opening of the last chapter. It gives us the "denouement" of this tragic story.

What happens, then, when the Seventh Seal is broken? It is at this point that we meet the curious and highly mysterious statement: "There was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour." Silence in heaven! A silence in that home of music; silence falling upon that busy fellowship of long-loved voices—its singing, its music, its sweet intercourse all hushed! What event can we think of in the account of human suffering capable of causing all heaven to pause with awe and reverent homage? There can be only one reply. It is the great punctuation point of human history—it is the tragedy of Calvary, the holy sacrifice of the Lamb of God, that cross which hallows and explains all our woe and makes Christ the Great Interpreter of the

riddle of life. There are two facts which confirm this view. The one is that the sacrifice of Calvary is the central interest of these chapters. The other is that the story of suffering is radically different before this point of punctuation and after it. Before it we have just the plain, unadorned experience of suffering of various kinds; but after it, while the suffering is as great, if not greater, it is of a more moral character. There is an increasing element of judgment and triumph in it, till it culminates in the great song of the victors, the vision of the multitude standing triumphant on the sea of glass. (Chapter 15.)

There, then, is the great conception of this Christian prophet. Over and against the inscrutable riddle of human suffering he places the story of Jesus crucified, yet triumphant, as the solution. Let us see how far he is justified in so doing.

The Supreme Riddle

Consider the riddle. What a closed book life is to all of us some of the time, and, to some of us it seems, all the time. We who toil in these fateful days are familiar with the great and terrible words of this book of mystery—pestilence, war, famine, death!

Ignorance, prejudice, and sin, how they continue to make a hideous maze of pain in which the soul gets hopelessly lost. And it is not so much the suffering against which we revolt as the seeming purposelessness of it all, its lack of rhyme and reason. "If we could only understand," we say, "we could bear it better."

Some of the personal riddles of suffering seem wrapped in impenetrable mystery. Here is one as a sample. A young girl, a V. A. D. nurse, fought desperately

during the war for the life of a badly wounded Australian soldier. He was a coarse sort of fellow; his language and thoughts were foul. Yet this refined girl saved his life, but at the cost of terrible suffering to herself. She contracted poison from his wound and lay for weeks between life and death, possibly between reason and madness. She recovered, and the Australian meanwhile had been invalided home to Australia. On his way home his ship was torpedoed and he found a watery grave. That is one little snapshot of life, and it raises in an acute form the problem of "why." Why such suffering, apparently so fruitless?

Let no one imagine that this is somebody else's problem and not theirs. Every life is faced with it eventually. Life has a way, a divine way, of testing our faith to its very foundations. If these days are days of happiness for you, *use them*, use them for a clear understanding of the riddle.

The great riddle of life breaks into two parts—the riddle of suffering and the riddle of sin. These two aspects are most intimately connected. Men sin because they are unhappy. Men pile up misery by sinning. It is another of those vicious circles with which, at last, we are becoming familiar. Now let us inquire how, precisely, Jesus solves this supreme riddle.

Christ Crucified Solves the Riddle of Suffering

Let us go where this riddle is at its *worst;* where the maze is most intricate; where the pain is at its maximum. Let us climb the hill of *superlative* agony and penetrate the garden of *deepest* gloom. Let us take the problem at its worst. Where is that? Where, indeed, but Gethsemane and Calvary? Do you doubt

that here is the story of human tragedy at its worst? How can you, when you realize that here *the best* suffers the *most*. Here the *highest hope* that ever visited mankind is *rejected and cast down*. The perfect holiness of Jesus makes this the supreme tragedy of history. Of all the rest of us it is at least possible to say: "He deserves some part of his pain." But what do we find here? The brightest light! A flame unquenchable! A spirit indomitable—nay more—perfectly triumphant!

Consider how utterly and surely that tragedy is turning to triumph. Before four centuries had passed those nail-pierced hands had grasped the Roman Empire. To-day the followers of the Crucified number more than any two other world-religions put together! When we are tempted to think that Christianity is failing, we ought to remember its colossal purpose. It proposes to win all human souls by moral persuasion—*every fresh generation and every race of men*. Compare what it has done with its tragic beginning, and I think you will feel how wonderful has been its progress. It was when his hands were pierced that Christ gripped humanity. It was when they crucified him that they enthroned him. As William Watson declares:

The Cæsars and the Alexanders pass,
But he who drank the hemlock,
He who drank the cup more dread on Calvary's hill,
These are the *servants* and the *conquerors* of all this mighty world.

Here, then, is hope. If the problem at its blackest opens out with such light, have we not here a revelation of God's purpose in all his permission of pain? Christ's cross illumines every lesser cross. But who can contemplate Jesus in his supreme sacrifice without responding to his leadership? Here is the practical

solution. Christ gives to men a new spirit in their suffering, a nobler courage, a deliverance from self. He gives them a sense of companionship. John must have felt this, exiled there in Patmos, anxious about the great cause intrusted to his care. "Why—why am I shackled here?" "Why does persecution rage against the followers of the Lamb?" Thus we may imagine him crying to his Lord. And back there comes this vision of the Crucified and the voice of the Conquering Lamb of God. "I, too, suffered." Is the disciple above his Lord?

> This is the way the Master went,
> Shall not the servant tread it still?

Here is the only solution of the problem of human suffering. Christ came and died for one great redeeming purpose, to awaken love finally in every human heart. That spirit which alone will make fullest sacrifice for others' sake. That spirit is the final escape from self. This is the Christian salvation. When all are eager to suffer for the rest of the world, then shall humanity lift its burden *unitedly* and none be crushed by an unequal weight. The spirit of self-seeking *creates* our problem. The Spirit of Christ the Saviour *solves* it. His way of the cross is the only way to the sorrowless world. Put this spirit into your bearing of your own grief. Christ calls you to his side—*and he is on a cross.* A great capacity for suffering—that is the supreme qualification for life. "If any man come after me . . . let him take up his cross daily."

> Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
> Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth:
> For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice,
> *And whoso suffers most hath most to give.*

Christ Crucified Solves the Riddle of Sin

What is the riddle of sin? Not the mystery of its origin, though much painful thought has been bestowed upon it. We know now probably all we shall know of that. Human sin is the "ancient good" of animal impulse rendered "uncouth" by the vision of the divine character. Its origin is plainly due to our own wilful choice. Consider your own experience. Is it not a fact that you have great difficulty in claiming your virtues? Somehow, although an expression of your own free choice, you *feel* that their origin lies beyond you. You would be the first to disclaim merit for them. When a man claims his own virtue we at once discount his virtue, do we not? But it is exactly opposite with sin. Our sins are our own with a quite peculiar proprietorship. We can foist them off upon nobody. What is the meaning of this distinction? What can it be other than that the origin of sin is in ourselves, in our own creative power of will, while all our virtue is but the life of God flowing into possession of our being.

> And every virtue we possess,
> And every victory won,
> And every thought of holiness
> Are his alone!

No! The riddle of sin lies in the mischief it causes. How shall that ever be put right? It is the problem of atonement. This, again, is *your* problem. It is no artificial creation of professional theologians; *it is the most insistent cry of every suffering heart.* Who will put right the glaring wrongs of life? Who will atone to widows and orphans for the sins of militarism? Who will atone to lives blighted by slumdom for the wicked

apathy of society? Who will atone for the lives and precious hopes massacred by alcohol? Here is the riddle indeed!

What of your own sin? It passed from your life to another, and to another. You pushed open the gate of hell, only a very little way, it is true, but another, misled by your example, pushed it open farther, and to-day by your doing, those gates stand open wide, and a great host passes through to the torments that sin ever brings. Your sin has passed beyond your control; it has passed into the very fabric of the world; it has become a racial power; it has smitten the hopes of all the world and the very face of God. Who can put its awful wrong right? Can you? Even as I ask this question you find yourself at the burning heart of the riddle. The secret soul of man has no respite from this problem. I have sinned! What shall I do? What can I do? Who will atone? Every soul knows sooner or later that deep cry of remorse. It is the hell of the soul, its pain being due to the outraged moral constitution of the universe cutting with its jagged and broken edge into the tender substance of the soul. To such only Christ brings peace. Only he, crucified, solves this riddle. Only he is fine enough, strong enough to lift this burden, and to do for us and in and with us what we never can do for ourselves. Hosts of guilty souls kneeling at that cross so eloquent with forgiving love have found the peace of a great assurance descend upon them, their hideous riddle has been solved. If they, why not we?

CHAPTER XI

THE RISEN REDEEMER

In the account of the resurrection of our Lord there is one particular vein of information that has quite peculiar significance. It is the record which ascribes to the risen Lord the possession still of the wounds inflicted in his crucifixion.

The story of "Thomas the Doubter" is one for which we may be intensely grateful, because it brings this feature into prominence. The action of Christ in displaying his wounds is represented as quite deliberate. "Jesus came and stood in their midst, and saith unto them, 'Peace be unto you,' and when he had said this he showed unto them his hands and his side." That statement has a great and precious significance.

The resurrection is sometimes represented by certain schools of thought as a mere vision launched from the minds of the disciples themselves; but would not such a Christ of purely subjective origin have been inevitably a Christ of glory, power, and vengeance? These men had not entered very greatly into the spirit of their Lord. Up to the eve of the great tragedy they had been quarrelling among themselves as to who should be greatest in the kingdom. Their religion up to that point was essentially a religion of the sovereignty of God. Had their own minds alone been responsible for the figure they seemed to behold, the wounds would scarcely have been included. In that case the essential element in the gospel would have been simply lost.

The gospel would have been ended by the cross

instead of being confirmed and sealed by it, for the essential element in the gospel is the redemptive passion and purpose of God. When, however, we discover this element in the records and find it insisted upon, that it is the *wounded* Christ that the disciples beheld, we know that it is the same Jesus with whom they are in touch, the humble Christ who forgave sins, who healed diseases, who taught the love of God the Father. Christ exalted, clothed with the glory of eternal life, is still the Christ of mercy, the Redeemer. That is a revelation to which the disciples could not have come naturally by the working of their own minds and feeling. It is capable of explanation only upon the assumption of the reality of Christ's continued life. They saw Christ as the Redeemer because the Redeemer was indeed risen. In his wounds was the preservation of the gospel. Let us explore this great truth a little further.

The plea of the wounds of the risen Christ is that we shall not interpret the redeeming love of Calvary as a minor element, a passing phase, but, instead, as the fundamental and abiding fact about God, the supreme revelation of his eternal character. As to how necessary such a revelation is, all Christian history bears witness. There is traceable in the past a strong tendency for the Church to clothe the exalted Christ in the panoply of judgment and terror, all too closely akin to the coarse vengeance of the worldly-minded. We have somehow imbibed, all too freely, the notion that up to the point of the cross we are dealing with a Christ who is gentle, meek, and mild, merciful and forgiving, but after Calvary the risen Lord becomes once more the Jehovah of the Old

Testament. The Saviour is again lost in the judge, the Redeemer in the sovereign.

A great many people still hesitate between a real and constant trust in love and a trust in force, between gospel and law, between a whole-hearted, generous freedom of thought and spirit, and the niggardly hedging that is always playing for safety by the use of worldly power. They are prepared to follow the revelation of God as love in Christ as far as it is safe and convenient to do so, but when it begins to make really awkward demands for self-sacrifice, they tend to fall back upon an earlier and lower conception of God. They have not really assimilated the gospel of the cross and of the risen Redeemer. The redemptive element in the universe asserts itself victoriously in Jesus, risen from the dead, more powerful after burial than before it. Henceforth he is at God's "right hand," an Eastern way of saying "in possession of the power and authority of God." Yet his power is still that of a human friend, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, whose face is unto the poor, and whose love is offered freely to the sinful: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

This does not mean that there is no great significance in that other New Testament phrase, "the wrath of the Lamb." Such "wrath" may have its place in dealing with souls so hardened in sin that no other method will bring them within the range of God's redeeming mercy; but as the wrath of "the Lamb" it will always have a perpetual heart of invincible gentleness and infinite mercy. Is there any fiercer judgment at last than the judgment of love? The wounds of Christ strike the deepest shame into the

heart that understands, and all the resources of a universe governed by a redeeming God are employed to bring the human heart to the point where it understands.

Now, when we embrace this spirit thus revealed to us in the risen Redeemer, we literally go forth to meet our Lord, and he becomes increasingly real and vivid to us. If you would discover the risen Lord and feel Christ's most powerful impact upon your soul, give place in your heart and life to his travail over human sin and misery and to the spirit of his sacrifice. It is where the wounds of redemption are found that you will find him. The eternal Christ, so long as the least need exists, is ever the crucified. Humanity, therefore, with true instinct for the divinest thing it knows when looking for Christ in you and me, looks for the wounds of his love. It deems a Church without sacrifice to be a Church without Christ.

It is by sacrifice that his presence is proved. With what triumph and finality St. Paul was able to declare to his critics and enemies: "Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear about my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Who could doubt St. Francis's knowledge of the Redeemer who saw his constant self-sacrifice. One of the most moving stories of our own time is that which is told of David Livingstone. Returning to his native land, after eighteen years in Africa, he attended Glasgow University to be made a Doctor of Law. The students of the University were bent, as usual, upon getting as much fun as possible out of the occasion, and they thought this "missionary fellow" would be a good bait for their humor. They made their usual elaborate arrangements for the use of pea shooters and

the production of unearthly noises. When, however, Livingstone appeared upon the rostrum, *gaunt and wrinkled after twenty-seven fevers, darkened by the sun, with one arm hanging useless from a lion's bite,* an unwonted awe and quiet descended upon the assembly. The pea shooters ceased firing. The turbulence was quelled, and Livingstone's testimony to the risen Redeemer fell upon the audience with overwhelming power.

"I am going back," he said. "Shall I tell you what sustained me amidst the toil, hardship, and loneliness of my exiled life? It was the promise, 'Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end.'" One who was present on this occasion has recorded that the effect which these words had, coming unexpectedly from one who was both the witness and example of the promise, "could not have been surpassed since they were first uttered in Galilee."

Jesus was known to the disciples at Emmaus in the breaking of the bread—it is a great symbol of the supreme form of revelation. Wherever the body is broken and the life is sacrificed in the service of human needs and the reclamation of sinners, there you have unmistakably his presence. Let those who would find him press into the van of the conflict against evil. Let them seek their own cross. He is ever to be found in the heart of the battle. It is said that in a certain Scottish battle the Scots carried with them a precious casket containing the heart of Robert the Bruce, and in the moment when defeat seemed certain the bearer of the casket flung it deliberatley into the midst of the foe, and then called upon his fellow Scotsmen to redeem

their treasure. The heart of the Bruce called, and the Scots won their battle.

Where human need is greatest, where souls are most oppressed by sin, there is the heart of the world's Redeemer, not still in death, but beating with infinite pity and unceasing passion to save, and those who press toward the same high service will most surely discover the risen Redeemer.

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CHAPTER XII

"THE ONE WHO STANDS BESIDE"

WHAT a master of names Jesus was! He gave us the word of words for God, Father. "The Son of Man," with its sweet human ring, was his favourite name for himself. Here he calls the Holy Spirit "the Comforter," and it is a name rich with most glorious and tender meaning. The Greek word is paracletos, sometimes directly translated paraclete, and its literal meaning is simply "The One Who Stands Beside."

It is not difficult to imagine what such a word must have meant to those first disciples. They were losing One who had drawn their souls into a peculiar dependence upon himself. Trained, as they were, to look to him, what should they do when he was gone? As they ponder the somber outlook there falls from those lips, whose every word they could so perfectly trust, this great promise of "the One who shall stand beside you." We know how completely that promise was fulfilled. We know that a new consciousness of God, the crown of Christian experience, came to those men. As the frail flower is stayed and strengthened by the stake arising from the ground at its side, so these men, frail and fickle, weak and cowardly, stand upright, strong, immovable, by the grace of the One who stands beside them.

"We must obey God rather than men," cried one of them who had before trembled at a serving maid's sneer.

This was the fruit of their fellowship with Christ—a new inner experience, sensation, of divine presence.

We cannot contemplate their experience without asking whether we share it. Have we, as yet, entered as we should, or might, into that vivid personal sense of God's contact with us which alone is worthy of the term "baptism of the Holy Ghost," and alone perfects our relationship to Christ. He leads us to the Father. Has he yet done so in your case?

Christians are often reproached with worshiping a man who lived two thousand years ago. That is not the case. We worship the living God, who is here and now, who was, and ever shall be. His manifestation in time was but a means to an end, that end his more perfect spiritual contact and communion with the souls of men.

Our chief need in life is adequate companionship. We are always feeling out after it; always looking for the soul in whose depths our own features are mirrored. The other self is the great lure of life. This is the deep inner meaning of all our friendships and alliances, our marriages and our fellowships. Our hearts are restless till they rest in another. As Aristotle said so long ago, "Man is a social animal;" but the deepest significance of that fact is that the soul of man in its social movement is on its way to the most perfect fellowship conceivable—he is searching for the heart of God.

We know how much companionship means to us in sorrow or trouble; how much more we can bear so long as we do not stand alone.

Bacon spoke truly of friendship when he claimed that it "doubles our joy and halves all our sorrow."

Yet, for all that, no human companionship is quite perfect or can wholly satisfy the soul.

It fails, first of all, in duration. How fitful is the

finest friendship! There are jarring moments; easily forgiven it may be, but none the less present. Duty may carry your friend from your side across the world, and his power of spiritual communion you will find very undeveloped. And always in the background lies the dark figure of death, of whom at last we shall have to say

> He put our souls so far apart
> We cannot hear each other speak!

Human companionship fails us in quality. Self-interest all too often dulls its vision. Always there are depths too deep, shrines too sacred, a "dweller in the innermost" too remote for mere human companionship. We need some One who can really, not approximately, share our point of view even while he transcends it.

Here is the supreme attraction of Jesus and his Holy Spirit. It was the perfect understanding Jesus showed of all who came to him that made him the magnet of souls. "Whilst thou wert under the fig tree I saw thee," said Jesus of Nathanael, and the man can only gasp with astonishment and delight. "Master! thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!" Have you never felt such rapture at meeting one who showed unusual understanding of you and insight into your soul? But what Jesus so perfectly achieved in the flesh he more perfectly achieves in the Spirit. He went away, as Henry Drummond put it, "to be nearer." By his Spirit he penetrates into the most secret place of the soul and comes truly face to face with you. In that face divine your own self is perfectly mirrored and counterparted even while he, the Greater Self of us all, includes and transcends your own being.

To enter into that experience is to know what

Paul meant when he wrote: "And we all, with unveiled face, reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed from glory unto glory."

Now is there any soul that does not desire that perfect companionship? Is there a soul living that has never felt round after that Other; after the great original source of its own life and being, the One who must understand and in whose knowledge one's true life can alone be found?

If every soul knows that quest, why do we not know better the finding?

To that question we must reply that finding is gloriously possible. "If with all your hearts ye truly seek me, ye shall ever surely find me." "If with all your heart!" We must put energy, determination, prolonged and patient attention, simple earnestness into this seeking. That assured, the "finding" should be certain, for no soul is alone in itself.

The solemn fact is that God is so near that we overlook him, so quiet and reverently unobtrusive that we look past him. At least this is a real danger if, as Tennyson has said, he is

> Closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.

Search the mind diligently and deeply enough and this One who stands beside you will be found as the very basis and means or soul of your thinking. Herbert Spencer claimed that the only reasonable explanation of our conceptions of the finite, the temporal, and the imperfect, is that they are subtly derived from deep and immediate spiritual contact with the infinite, the eternal, and the perfect. Is there any other explanation of these ideas that occurs to you? All measurement

must be by a standard. If we feel ourselves to be limited, small, transient, must it not be because One stands beside us, perfect and eternal, casting the alluring shadow of his glory upon all our life?

Search the consience, and you come upon an authority sublime and awful in its absoluteness and perfection. The story of Luther before the Diet of Worms is typical of a constantly recurring fact in human history. Always there has stood in advance of his fellows some soul able to say, "I can do no other, so help me God!" and that soul has been able to take its lonely stand obviously only by the discovery of One, greater than all else, standing beside him. All such prophets speak "as the Holy Spirit giveth utterance." What is this pressure of moral ideals but a higher life seeking to penetrate and elevate your own? You could feel no authority in conscience were it but yourself, or even your better self, speaking. When conscience speaks there is an echo in its tones from the eternal hills, the sea, the sky, the thunder, from all things that are, or have been, or ever will be. Behind its "still small voice" is all the weight of a universe built by righteousness, and all the majesty of the Builder.

Now, it is the unique value of Jesus that to this One who stands beside us he gives form and character, and therefore vividness and power.

The unseen yet all-pervading Spirit of God came forth to the seen to rivet irresistibly the attention of men. He then withdrew once more into the unseen to draw our attention after him and so concentrate it at the seat of divine power, the right hand of God, the spiritual presence, and personality divine.

For it is everything to the religious life for the

haunting sense of divine nearness, which all souls experience from time to time, to be focussed in a form easily imaged to the mind, a historic figure having a certain definite behavior and clothing with warm life and vivid reality that character we need most to find in God. This is what Jesus does. Thus he brings us to the Father, to the indwelling Spirit of all, revealing him no longer as a mere rebuke to our imperfect thinking and foolish conduct, but as our Friend, our Stay, our Comforter, the One who stands beside us in perfect comradeship.

To enter into that truth, with all its natural exhilaration, struggling to absorb its splendor of promise and blessing, is to know "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." It is to experience that coming of the Holy Ghost which is like the coming of a flower. There is a sense in which the flower has not yet come when it is only present in bud. It is all there, but its inwardness is not revealed. Similarly with the presence of God in any life. That presence is indispensable to life itself. "In him we live and move and have our being." Yet how possible it is for us to do that and yet not know his personal indwelling. We dwell in him apart from him all too often. If we will let Jesus do for us his peculiar work, he will, by drawing us to himself and withdrawing himself into this inner and unseen presence, bring us unto God and bring God unto us. There will break into flower in our soul all the vague hintings of that Other's presence, and our personal joy in God will be at last completed. Will you not turn and speak with this One who stands beside you?

For warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he;
And faith hath still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

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